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**THE PSYCHOLOGY OF
THE GREAT WAR**

THE PSYCHOLOGY *of* THE GREAT WAR

BY
GUSTAVE LE BON

TRANSLATED BY E. ANDREWS

NEW YORK
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1916

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PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

ONE of the plainest lessons taught by history, and one of those most substantially verified by the present war, is that nations are not ruled by realities, but by the more or less illusory ideas which they form of these realities. The truth about an historical event may be revealed fifty years after it has taken place, but is seldom known at the time of its occurrence.

The origins of the European War are a fresh justification of this theory, for the Germans are firmly convinced that the conflict is due to a conspiracy secretly plotted by England, and yet England, as a perusal of the diplomatic correspondence shows us, was eminently desirous of peace, and until the very last moment made the most desperate efforts to preserve it.

At no period of her history had England been so ill-prepared for war, and never had she so wished to avoid it at any price. Her parliamentary dissensions and the civil war which threatened her in Ireland were enough to make her statesmen relinquish any bellicose desires which they might have cherished, but, nevertheless, they were induced to take up the gauntlet.

The mental differences which divide the various nations are so deep-seated that it is very difficult for them to understand the motives of one another's

Preface to the English Edition

conduct. Legal theorists in Germany are so contemptuous of treaties that the idea of a nation embarking upon hostilities merely because it considered itself bound as a signatory, could never enter their minds. No Teutonic statesman could understand that any one would make war for such a reason, and to the German nation it was even less intelligible.

This is why the present struggle is a conflict of principles even more than of interests. The question is whether the conquests which it has taken civilization so long to secure, and which are the foundations of social and international life, must disappear for ever. If the Teutons are to win brute force alone will reign over the world and none of our former moral laws will be respected.

But Germany will never prevail until the last Briton has perished. The English people have been slow—too slow, as their Allies may think—in adapting themselves to the exigencies of modern warfare; but their adjustment is now complete.

The change was more difficult for England than for the other nations, because she was obliged to relinquish her time-honoured traditions of liberty, to adopt universal compulsory military service, for which she had an intense dislike, and to renounce her commercial freedom in order to militarize her industry. She has had to do many other things besides; but it is all over now. England has been slow, but she is ready to-day, and with what crushing weight her puissant might will press upon Germany's destiny the Teutonic Empire will henceforth know to its cost.

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BOOK I

**PSYCHOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES NECES-
SARY FOR THE INTERPRETATION
OF THE PRESENT WORK**

INTRODUCTION

PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE WAR

IT is not my intention to examine the events of the European War in the following pages, but simply to analyse the psychological phenomena which surround its genesis and evolution ; for the many passions which agitate us make it impossible at the present time to give a trustworthy account of such a contest as this. The generations which are the makers of history are not its writers, because a certain period of time must elapse before the great dramas which arise out of men's passions can be comprehended. History is unjust to the living, and impartial to none save to the dead. At the back of the events whose course we are watching to-day, however, lies the vast province of the immaterial forces which have brought them about ; for the phenomena of the visible world are rooted in a world invisible, wherein the feelings and beliefs which rule us are wrought to their perfection. This province of causes is the only one which I now propose to investigate.

* * *

The war, which has brought so many nations into conflict, burst like a clap of thunder upon a

The Psychology of the Great War

Europe which was pacifist in its tendencies, even though it remained armed perforce, and which hoped from the success scored by diplomacy during the Balkan War that the official guardians of peace would be able to avert hostilities for some time to come. Peace, however, was not to be, and after a week of diplomatic conversations Europe was in a blaze.

Events so great and awe-inspiring cannot have been dependent upon the will of any one man, but are rather due to deep-seated, remote, and varied causes which had been slowly piling up until the day when their effects swam suddenly into our ken.

In the production of historical events causes would seem to increase by arithmetical progression, effects by the swifter process of geometrical progression.

In order to understand the true sources of the European War one must go back to the facts which preceded it, and above all to the study of the changes which have taken place in the modern German mind; for the conduct of a nation, and hence its history, is derived from its mentality.

* * *

The present war is a contest between psychological forces. Irreconcilable ideals are grappling with one another. Individual liberty is drawn up against collective servitude, personal initiative against the tyranny of State Socialism, old habits of international integrity and respect for treaties against the supremacy of the cannon. The ideal

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of the absolutism of force, whose triumph Germany is now striving to secure, is nothing new, for in antiquity it reigned supreme, and the attempt to substitute another for it has cost Europe a struggle of two thousand years. The victory of the Teutonic theory would carry the nations back to the most distressful periods of their history, back to the eras of violence when the law of the strongest was the sole foundation of justice.

Men were beginning to forget the dark ages in which the weak were pitilessly crushed, the useless were brutally cast off, and the ideals of the nations were conquest, slaughter, and pillage. But the belief that the progress of civilization had once and for all destroyed the barbarous customs of primitive periods was a dangerous illusion, for new hordes of savages, whose ancestral ferocity the centuries have not mitigated, even now dream of enslaving the world that they may exploit it.

The ideas which dominate Germany inspire apprehension because they have come to assume a religious form. Like the Arabs of Mohammed's day, the Teutonic nations are deluded by a dream which makes them fancy that they are a superior race, destined first to conquer the world and then to regenerate it.

A nation's deities are the embodiment, not only of its illusions but of its material needs, its jealousies and hatreds as well, and to this rule Germany's new gods are no exception. They belong to the clan of those mystic powers who have played such a preponderant part in history, and for whose triumph millions of men have perished

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miserably, flourishing cities have been laid low, and mighty empires have been founded.

The present contest has more than one analogy with the religious wars of olden times. It is begotten of the same illusions and shows traces of the same incoherence, frenzy, and brutality. It is ruled exclusively by irrationality, for if reason had been able to dominate the aspirations of kings and nations, there would have been no war to-day.

* * *

It is quite useless to invoke the resources of rational logic in any attempt to explain the concatenation of circumstances whose tragic unfoldment has the world for audience; for if one examines the European War from the standpoint of pure reason, both its origin and development seem a chaos of improbabilities which could not have been foreseen by the most sagacious mind.

With what data does the war actually furnish us?

In the first place it shows us a monarch who for twenty-five years has maintained a state of peace that was necessary for the prosperity of his Empire, but who suddenly allows himself to be drawn into a formidable conflict that he does not desire; secondly, we see a nation which has been expanding its trade and manufactures from day to day, and which nevertheless not merely consents to enter upon a bloody contest that will ruin it for a long time to come, but does so with delirious delight; and lastly, we find men of culture who burn the cities and century-old libraries and masterpieces of art which had been spared by all pre-

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ceding wars. What prophet could have foretold that so many inconsistencies would come to pass?

Among the unforeseeable phenomena to which this war has given rise must also be noted the explosion of mystic frenzy which has burst from the German people, and from which even the most celebrated scholars have not been able to escape, because the influence of mental contagion has prevailed over reason to such an extent that their utterances are enveloped in a whirlwind of madness. On the French side, too, there have been many changes, quite as impossible to anticipate. An impressionable, volatile, and undisciplined nation has suddenly become transformed into a resolute and tenacious body of men, for months together stoically enduring the underground existence of the cruel trenches and the constant menace of an obscure death. And, lastly, history will surely add to all these other surprises the sacrifice of heroic little Belgium, the sight of whose burning cities and massacred women and children did not make her hesitate a moment to defend her honour. None of the Great Powers—Germany least of all—had a presentiment that so weak a nation would offer such resistance to so mighty an enemy.

This series of tragic incidents could not be foreseen by reason simply because reason was not the motive of any single one. Where, then, are we to seek for their causes?

* * *

Men of learning, whose investigations are guided by rational logic alone, are fain to believe that

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the world is always governed by it, and wax indignant when phenomena seem to elude its influence. But they forget that side by side with the intellectual beacons which pilot the scientist in his researches and the philosopher in the discovery of his principles, there exist affective, mystic, and collective forces that have no kinship with the intellect, but have each a logic of its own, differing widely from rational logic, which is the foundation of science, to be sure, but not of history. Those forms of logic which are independent of the intellect were long unknown, for their links are forged in the dim realm of the unconscious, the science of which is but just beginning to be studied. As long as the part they played was not appreciated, writers endowed events with a rational origin which they never possessed, and thus transformed history into an imaginary construction very different from what it actually is.

Now, these ideas, although fundamental, are still rather novel, so that when I had presented them in several of my works, I had a desire to make a practical demonstration of their value by applying them to a study of the French Revolution, one of the greatest events of the past. The protagonists of that tragedy were for ever appealing to Reason—they even deified her—and yet it would be difficult to mention any period in history when she swayed men less; for never have illustrious personages been known to speak and act so often in contradiction to their own desires. The secret forces which ruled the actors in that great drama were drawn from quite other sources than the

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rationalism to which they constantly appealed ; but to ascertain the nature of these forces has been a task reserved for modern science.

The events which are now taking place present psychological problems that are quite as difficult as those which long enveloped the revolutionary period. If the principles we have laid down are correct, they ought to shed light, not only upon the genesis of the illusions against which the nations are now contending, but also upon the causes of many things which are apparently incomprehensible and which range from the various opinions about the origin of the war to the burning of works of art and the massacres which have aroused the world's deepest indignation.

* * *

The European War marks the beginning of an era of upheaval in our manner of life, our feelings, and our thoughts. We have perhaps reached one of those historical periods in which, as at the time of the French Revolution, the ideals and principles of mankind are changed and a new aristocracy makes its appearance. The nations are being hurried towards a future which is not yet illumined by the faintest glimmer of light. Something they cannot foresee holds dominion over them, and political and moral ideas which they had considered incapable of change now seem destined to disappear. Theories and doctrines are vanishing one after the other, and no longer is the future assured, for the psychological forces which are locked in mortal combat are but beginning their work.

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The illusions of orators and writers are eclipsed by deeds of action, and discussion falls silent before the noise of the guns.

France will no doubt emerge regenerated and all the stronger from the present tragedy, for the heroic qualities of her defenders show that the anarchy which seemed to threaten her was purely superficial. The dauntless courage of our young men is a consoling sight to the wondering eyes of us who behold it. They will have lived through the most prodigious adventure in history, an epos whose grandeur transcends that of the most far-famed legends. For what are the exploits of Homer's warriors, or the gallant feats of Charlemagne's fabulous companions, or the combats of paladins and magicians, compared with the gigantic struggles at whose progress the world looks on amazed?

No one could have foreseen the marvellous efflorescence of the selfsame virtues in men who come from the most widely sundered classes of society. Withdrawn from their tranquil existence on the farm, in the office, the workshop, the school, or even the palace, they find themselves abruptly transported into the heart of an adventure so stupendous and impossible that only in dreams have men ever had glimpses of its like. Truly they are new beings whom threatened France has seen rise up in her defence, beings created by a rejuvenescence of the ancestral soul, which sometimes slumbers but never dies. Sons of the heroes of Tolbiac, Bouvines, and Marengo, these dauntless fighters felt all the valour of their glorious fathers

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revive within them at their country's first call. Plunged into a hideous inferno, they have often spoken heroic words such as history makes immortal. "Arise, ye dead!" cried the last soldier in a trench surrounded on every side to his wounded companions who had been laid low by the enemy's machine-guns. Greece would have plaited crowns for that man and sung his memory.

To die a hero in a noble cause is an enviable lot for one who has believed himself destined to naught save an empty and monotonous existence; for not according to length of days is life worth living, but according to work accomplished, and the defenders of the sacred soil of our fathers, the handicraftsmen of our future, they who have forged a new France on the anvil of Fate, our dead, who yet are immortal, are already entered into the pantheon of those demi-gods whom the nations adore and whom the hand of Time himself can no more harm.

CHAPTER I

THE AFFECTIVE, COLLECTIVE, AND MYSTIC FORCES, AND THE PART THEY PLAY IN THE LIFE OF NATIONS

1. *The Cycles of Life*

A SUPERFICIAL observer of the European War, seeing the extremely skilful scientific combinations exhibited by the various armies and the weapons they employ, might easily fancy that some quite safe and trustworthy form of rational logic was in sole command of the situation. Nor would this be a false conclusion, were it limited to the technical side of warfare ; but further investigation soon discloses the fact that the thoughts, feelings, and actions of the combatants are under the guidance of superior forces. Material weapons are being utilized in the struggle, to be sure, but they are wielded by psychological forces, which reign supreme over the bloody fields heaped high with the countless dead who, while in life, were docile and often unconscious servitors of the powers which ruled their wills. Immaterial forces are indeed the true leaders of battles, and behind every cannon and every bayonet the discerning eye may discover the invisible masters who have set them in motion.

In order to make clear the nature of these forces

Affective, Collective, and Mystic Forces

I must briefly recapitulate some of the psychological principles which I have already laid down in my preceding works.¹

The vital phenomena are enveloped in such mystery that it is impossible to explain them at present. One can only say that matters proceed as though each of the different elements—biological, affective, and the rest—of which a living being is composed, had an independent existence, and were subject to a special form of logic, by which word I mean a determinate succession of phenomena.

Biological logic governs the cycle of the organic life and the desires whose satisfaction is necessary to sustain it, affective logic regulates the feelings and instincts by which we are guided, collective logic conditions morality and social life, mystic logic begets gods and creeds, and intellectual logic gives rise to the discoveries which transform human existence.

Each of these different cycles of life thus having its own particular laws, no one single form of logic can explain their separate manifestations, so that our methods of interpretation must necessarily change as we proceed from one plane of phenomena to another.

At the root of all life lies the organic cycle, the realm of that unalloyed uniformity which causes the cells of a man, a rat, or a bird to operate

¹ *Lois psychologiques de l'Evolution des peuples, La Psychologie des foules, Les Opinions et les Croyances, La Révolution française et la Psychologie des Révolutions, La Vie des Vérités, La Psychologie politique.* The small volume called *Aphorismes du Temps présent* is a summary of the principles set forth in the above works.

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similarly under the influence of the vital laws, especially under pleasure and pain, the two great centralizing emotions of all existence.

This uniformity is less complete in the cycle of the affective life, which includes the feelings, passions, and so forth ; but here, too, all living creatures are still much alike ; for love, hatred, jealousy, courage, and devotion appear quite as well developed in certain domestic animals as in their masters.

It is only in the cycle of the rational life that we encounter differences of considerable moment between man and the lower animals, as well as immense intellectual variations between sundry representatives of the human race. But, although rational logic rules the scientist's laboratory to the exclusion of everything else, it exerts only a feeble influence upon the conduct of individuals and peoples, whose existence is chiefly conditioned by affective, mystic, and collective elements, and to understand national life a knowledge of these forces which really sway it is essential, for its thoughts and actions are seldom directed by reason.

2. The Affective and Intellectual Forces.

Character results from an inherited combination of feelings or affective elements, and is our great guide in life ; for, although we understand by means of our intelligence, our behaviour is regulated by our character. Intellect makes us think, but character makes us act, and indeed plays the leading part in our conduct. Character is, accordingly,

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the most important factor in the lives of individuals and nations ; but its development has no connection with that of the intellect. "When mind rules character," says General Marmont, "one is always changing one's opinion and altering one's plans and course of action ; for a great intellect is constantly looking at problems from different points of view."

The development of our feelings is independent of our will. No man can love or hate as he lists.

The various opinions about the origin of the war furnish a striking example of how little importance is attached to rational evidence by convictions which are based on emotion. This is sometimes rather surprising ; but it is due to the fact that feeling and reason are not obedient to the same form of logic, and hence are incapable of influencing one another ; for one feeling may be opposed by another feeling, but never by reason.

The most celebrated philosophers do not as yet seem to have reached any definite conclusion as to the respective parts played by the affective and the rational. According to M. Boutroux, the French are ruled by feeling, while intellectualism governs the Germans ; but I do not believe that this generalization is quite accurate, for, although the Germans may be great reasoners, still, they are governed by their feelings, good or bad, precisely like all other nations. Cruelty has the same right to be called a feeling as has kindness, and is part and parcel of the vast realm of the affective, from which no creature can escape.

Affective influences are among the great regulative forces of history. By the strength with which

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they clothe our ideas they lead us to look at things in different ways, according to the varying degrees of our sensibility. All nations possess an aggregate of inherited feelings, which are determinative of their mental orientation, which cause individuals of unlike ancestral equilibria to take different views of the same questions, and which occasion those inextinguishable race-hatreds that are among the chief causes of the European War, as we shall presently see.

In great international conflicts these hatreds, which are affective, and not at all rational in their origin, take on an aspect of extreme intensity, to the subversion of the other feelings, and to them may well be applied Hippocrates' saying, that the greater of two simultaneously occurring pains drives out the lesser.¹ When the war broke out we were possessed of domestic hatreds, both political and religious, which were bitter enough, to be sure, but they were obliterated by the ruling hatred which we felt for our aggressors. This phenomenon very probably results from a general psychological law, since it has been observed everywhere. England was on the eve of civil war with Ireland, and yet all the political parties of the Empire are joined together in defence of the same flag; while in Russia even the anarchists and revolutionaries are now transformed into loyal supporters of the Throne. If the existence of this psychological principle had been suspected by the Germans they would not have counted upon the domestic dissensions of England and France as an element of success.

¹ *Duobus doloribus simul obortis vehementior obscurat alterum.*

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What I have just said with regard to the disappearance of a weak feeling before a strong one obviously applies only to feelings of the same kind. A violent hatred drives out a weak hatred, but permits feelings of a different nature to exist, and indeed may even be strengthened by them. The hatred we feel against our aggressors, for instance, has been intensified by the indignation which German cruelty has awakened in us, and by the sympathy which the Belgians' heroic defence of their country has aroused in our midst.

3. *The Collective Forces.*

The mentality of men in crowds is absolutely unlike that which they possess when isolated, for an assemblage of men is as different from the individuals of whom it is made up as is any living being from its component cells.

Reason has very little influence upon the collective mind, which is governed by collective logic, a form strictly peculiar to it. Intellectually collective man always appears inferior to individual man, but may be superior to him in the domain of the feelings; for although certain feelings, like gratitude, for instance, are unknown to the crowd, it possesses others, such as altruism, devotion to the general welfare, and even heroism, which are far more difficult to put in practice. The powers of the average man are increased by joining a collectivity, while those of the superior man are curtailed.

The emotions of the crowd are both intense and fickle, thus allowing it to change quickly from

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adoration to hatred, and as it is lacking in the sense of practical possibilities, hope is its principal nourishment. The mysticism with which it is impregnated induces it to attribute magic powers to the leader who beguiles it, and to the brief formulas which synthesize its desires. Mental contagion operates upon isolated individuals as well as upon collectivities, but as the latter do not reason it plays the leading part among them.

The crowd is likewise very receptive of illusions, which acquire the force of truths from the mere fact of becoming collective. The present war furnishes numerous examples of this law.

Collective opinion has a great deal of strength, which is seldom spontaneous, however, for the crowd is really an amorphous organism that is incapable of action unless it has a leader, who influences it by affirmation, repetition, prestige, and contagion, all of them methods of persuasion peculiar to affective logic.

There must always be a leader to create and direct public opinion, even in the case of national conflicts, though this leader need not be a man who harangues the crowd, for his part may be played by beliefs or inherited feelings which certain circumstances have violently inflamed. But the real starting-point of popular opinion is invariably the leader or the great event which acts as his substitute.

In a work on the causes of the war, M. Lévy Bruhl thus sums up the ideas of our scholars with regard to this principle, which they have rather neglected :—

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“During the crises in which history assumes a dramatic character, the actors who occupy the centre of the stage are precisely what Emerson calls *representative men*, men whose words and deeds express the tendencies and passions of the nameless crowd, and who are individual organs of collective volitions.”

This thesis, which is upheld by all the German historians, and is very popular in French scholarly circles just now, is derived from the fact that at a given time the collective will becomes supreme, and the leader may actually be transformed into a follower as he is swept along by a flood of his own creating. But, in spite of this, one has only to pursue the course of events a little way in order to discover that a collective opinion is usually derived from an individual opinion.

This law obviously applies to the early history of the great religions, as it also does to the more important political crises, and particularly to the European War.

One of the very foundations of the art of ruling is the capacity for creating and conserving collective feelings and the general opinions which result from them. At the present day there is no longer any despot powerful enough to rule in opposition to public opinion, which, however, is fortunately easy to create. That the German Government realizes the power of this important factor is proved by the vast sums which it has spent during the war with the object of winning popularity abroad, while one reason of its domestic strength in the present conflict is its past and present ability to

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direct the opinions of its subjects according to its own desires. Journalists, authors, and professors have tamely submitted to its will, and have thus enabled it to transform the European struggle into a national war. It is the entire German nation which is fighting to-day, not a sovereign or a military caste. But we must remember that the Government has found its task an easy one only because the collective military spirit of the nation had already completely destroyed the civic spirit.

Large assemblies have the principal characteristics of crowds, such as a mediocre intellectual average, excessive irritability, sudden transports of fury, intolerance, and blind obedience to their leaders, and yet it is to assemblies of just this sort that the great civilized nations have finally entrusted their destinies. Experience appears to prove that the collective despotism of such assemblies presents fewer disadvantages than the despotism of an individual or a caste, for large assemblies generally succeed in throwing light upon the questions submitted to them, and the fear of being criticized by them prevents many acts of injustice. The Russians gave us a proof of this when they convened the Duma as a last resource, after they had suffered repeated defeats, and as a matter of fact the Duma alone revealed the actions that had brought upon the country the dire catastrophes of which we are aware.

In ordinary times the intellectual forces of a country's best elements easily predominate over its collective forces, but in great crises, such as wars,

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revolutions, and the like, this is not the case ; for the collective forces, which are derived from individual influences, are then capable of becoming so powerful as to sweep whole countries into an irresistible whirlpool, and to cause the emergence of new manifestations of the national mentality.

4. *The National Mind.*

The individual mind has only an ephemeral existence, but the mind of the race is permanent and not subject to disintegration. The race-mind, or, in other words, the national mind, is not made in a day, but is the product of a lengthy past, for the history of civilized nations is the story of their efforts to acquire this permanent mind, which alone can extricate them from barbarism.

When the ancestral mind has acquired sufficient stability it may act in opposition to the unstable minds of individuals and crowds, restricting their fluctuations, and thus strengthening the nation to a considerable degree.

As we have seen very clearly during the present war, the ancestral mind has the power of making men who belong to the same country think and act alike upon great occasions. If all Frenchmen of military age have unrepiningly forsaken their situations and their individual interests and are exposing their lives from day to day, it is because their selfish individual impulses have suddenly become subject to the mind of the race. It is no exaggeration to say that the fiercest fighting upon our fields of battle is due to the innumerable hosts of the dead more than to the living.

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There is no reason why I should investigate the process of racial formation in this place, for, despite the fallacious statements of the German historians, it may be affirmed that there are no unmixed races among civilized nations to-day. Nations are the offspring of the accidents of history, and are born when peoples of sometimes quite different origin, like the modern Prussians, have been subjected for a long period to common conditions of life, and are united by common interests. Community of language and religion is one of their most unfailing elements of cohesion.

In every phase of its life each historical race implies certain institutions, rules of morality, beliefs, and arts, and does not imply certain others, for no nation has ever been able to adopt a foreign civilization without transforming it.

It follows from what I have just said that all of us possess both an individual mind and an ancestral mind, and although the former may preside over the actions of our daily life, it is the latter which guides us upon great occasions, especially such as involve national existence. It is natural that the individual mind should be selfish, for the individual's chief thought is of himself; but it is no less natural that the ancestral mind, which is exclusively preoccupied about the race, should induce the individual to sacrifice himself in its interests.

5. *The Mystic Forces.*

The term "mysticism" has quite different meanings in philosophy and in religion. It is one of the

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many words whose content varies at different periods of time and according to the individuals who employ it. Generally speaking, one may say that mysticism is characterized by a taste for mystery, love of the supernatural, contempt of experience, and a belief that superior powers intervene in mundane phenomena.

Mysticism is the source of the easy explanations which satisfied mankind for centuries. Even at the most advanced periods of their history the nations of antiquity never attained to the idea that Nature was governed by immutable laws. In their eyes the gods dominated all phenomena: Neptune ruled the seas, and Ceres ripened the harvests.

Mysticism has appeared under various forms at different times; but the devotee's ecstatic union with God and a belief in fetishes, relics, miraculous waters, and the magic powers of a political formula are kindred phenomena, for religious, political, and social mysticism all belong to the same family.

Mysticism has its own laws, and its logical concatenations differ greatly from those of affective and rational logic. One of the few features common to both affective and mystic logic is the use of affirmations unsupported by rational demonstration. Mysticism and reason, in any case, belong to mutually exclusive spheres, for mystic beliefs are induced by suggestion or mental contagion, but never by ratiocination. Reason can no more create them than it can destroy them, since they appear to the believer in the guise of absolute truths whose evidence is so clear that the mere fact of controverting them implies an entire lack of fairness.

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It is easy to understand the strength developed by such postulates.

Material needs are no more taken into consideration by mystical impulses than are rational arguments. Under their influence pain, self-interest, and even maternal love disappear, as I have shown elsewhere by celebrated examples. In the name of his faith a mystic does not hesitate to destroy the beings who are dearest to him, and consequently it is to mysticism that we owe the martyrs of all creeds, religious, political, and social.

A collective form, which results from mental contagion and greatly strengthens the true believer, is readily assumed by mysticism. The Jews in antiquity, the Arabs in the Middle Ages, and the Germans to-day prove that it has always been of the greatest advantage for a nation to believe itself destined by God to regenerate the world.

No one can affirm that he is completely free from the influence of mysticism, for even those whose intellects are the clearest are not certain of escape from it when the equilibria of their mental life are overthrown by turmoil and confusion. They become utterly changed, lose all idea of reality, and the rational logic inherent in them breaks down. The part played by mysticism in the origin and evolution of the European War has been immense, as we shall see.

The mystic forces, which science long disdained or knew not of, rank foremost among the motives which rule mankind. The preponderant part they play is made obvious by a mere enumeration of the fundamental causes underlying all the strife which

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has accumulated upon the surface of our planet since the beginning of time.

These chief factors of the great conflicts of humanity are related to three groups of causes : biological, affective, and mystic.

Among the biological factors are the hunger and desire which in days of yore let the Germanic hordes loose upon the world, after they had so multiplied and increased that their native forests could no longer furnish them with the means for supporting existence. Among the affective factors are the various passions, such as hatred, cupidity, and others like them, which have plunged many nations into mutual warfare, and have destroyed more than one civilization. Among the mystic factors are those forces which hurled the Arabs upon the Roman Empire on purpose to disseminate the religion of their Prophet in its midst, and which, at the time of the Crusades, flung the European nations against the East, where they hoped to win the sepulchre of their God. The religious wars and persecutions, which during more than one century covered Europe with ruins, and the flaming stakes of martyrs, were of mystic origin too, as was also the dream of the Revolutionary Armies, who wished to conquer the nations that they might afterwards convert them to their own creed.

Motives of mystic origin have always been the strongest of mankind's various incentives ; for it is they which have created the illusions that quicken history, they under whose influence great empires have been destroyed and others founded, and they upon which even now rest the foundations of civi-

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lization. The modern world deems itself free from their sway, and yet humanity has never been more enslaved by them. Political, religious, or social, they all belong to the same family, perform the same actions, and are subject to the same laws. Reason does not rule them.

If Europe is to-day in conflagration, if the flower of our youth is dying on bloody battle-fields, and if countless families are left desolate, it is because one nation believes itself destined to regenerate the world, upon which it means to impose its own mystic chimera of universal domination.

CHAPTER II

THE VARIATIONS OF PERSONALITY

1. *The Stability and Variability of Personality*

THE older psychology looked upon the human soul as a distinct, homogeneous element, superposed upon the body and separable from it ; whilst personality was regarded as something strictly determinate and incapable of any great variation. This view no longer seems tenable, however, and we now consider the man whom the earlier theories artificially endowed with a fixed personality as a mere figment.

Real man is quite different ; for whether he is such a being as one encounters in everyday life, or one of the heroes of history, he represents an aggregate of various elements whose combination produces the equilibria which in their entirety constitute what we call the ego, and which, once set up in this manner, persist as long as their environment remains unchanged.

Stability of personality is thus seen to depend solely upon permanence of environment, for as soon as a change takes place in the latter, the equilibria of the elements which form an individual's mental life are overthrown, with the result that new equilibria are established and he gains a new personality.

Such transformations of personality constitute a

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phenomenon which often occurs during revolutionary periods, as I have pointed out, and which the present war permits us to observe without difficulty.

It is impossible to foresee the nature and hence the behaviour of a personality thus hastily constructed. The men who lived under the Terror have left us many examples of the fact that the mildest individual may become eager to shed blood and, even without going so far afield, we may assert that no one could have predicted either the barbarity of the German intellectuals in the present war or the good qualities of which the French have given proof.

Such changes of personality have been noticed daily during the war, and I shall have occasion to mention several of them which are very striking; but for the present I shall confine myself to a quotation from the remarks made by the celebrated English author Mr. Rudyard Kipling, after he had paid a visit to the Front:—

“You know, when supreme trial overtakes an acquaintance whom till then we conceived we knew, how the man’s nature sometimes changes past knowledge or belief. He who was altogether such an one as ourselves goes forward simply, even lightly, to heights we thought unattainable. Though he is the very same comrade that lived our small life with us, yet in all things he has become great. So it is with France to-day. She has discovered the measure of her soul.”

The old doctrine of the immutability of personality is still so prevalent, however, that we are

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always surprised to see people alter their behaviour and change their opinions when they take up a new position, and consequently enter into a new environment. And yet, how can they help modifying their conduct, since they have become different men?

Even though nothing occurs of sufficient importance to overthrow the personality, the ego is, nevertheless, a frail structure, susceptible of rather large fluctuations. Illness injures it, grief depresses it, and happiness causes it to expand.

Day by day our personality may thus undergo more or less extensive fluctuations, and they would be greater still were it not for all manner of restraints with which civilization surrounds the ego and constantly circumscribes its deviations. Social life would be impossible if human personality were not somewhat stabilized by innumerable rules, laws, and customs which may not be transgressed. No civilization can exist without restraints.

Wars and revolutions furnish more than enough examples to show what human personality becomes in the absence of the inhibitory laws which are the defensive armour of every civilization. The world has looked on amazed at the deeds of savage bestiality which have been committed in the present struggle. They are the work of a nation endowed with a high form of intellectual cultivation, but also possessing instincts of ancestral barbarism which have hitherto been merely held in check by social sanctions whose disappearance the war has brought about as a matter of course. And if all the belligerent nations have not followed such examples, it is because the individuals of whom

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some of them are composed have been so long under the influence of social restraints that their feelings have acquired a certain amount of stability.

In proportion as heredity stabilizes the mentality of a nation, social restraints become less necessary to curb its primitive barbarism, because a discipline from within then takes the place of the external discipline imposed by the laws. Very few nations have attained to this degree of stability, and even among them social restraints are still indispensable for the guidance of those multitudes of volatile and irresolute characters whose mental equilibria are so unstable that no power of regulating conduct is to be found in them. Such beings are as formless as a cloud of dust, yielding obedience to all the impulses borne in upon them, wavering for ever like Hamlet, and never making up their minds.

2. The Conscious Will and the Unconscious Will.

The phenomena perceived by consciousness are mere reflections of an inner psychic life of which we are ignorant, but in which the most important incentives of conduct are elaborated.

From the elaboration of these incentives results the will. It appears in the two forms of the conscious will, which is the only one recognized by psychologists, and of the unconscious will, which, although not acknowledged, nevertheless has the more extensive sphere of the two.

The conscious will implies free reflection and objective discussion, while in the unconscious will it is the unconscious itself which reflects for us.

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In the latter case decisions are fully formed when they reach the field of our consciousness, which usually accepts them, although of course it may reject them.

The unconscious will originates in the necessities, desires, and aspirations of the race, group, or environment by which our personality is surrounded. These aspirations, necessities, and desires expand into the suggestions and impulses which are sometimes the lords of our unconscious will, always its guides. The conduct of most people is entirely under the sway of the unconscious will, and as it becomes known to them only at the instant when action takes place their words and deeds are often observed to disagree entirely with one another.

The duality thus formed by the conscious and the unconscious will is seen among whole nations which by virtue of a lengthy past possess an ancestral mind so stabilized as to render their conduct in the highest degree conducive to the general welfare, although their individual minds, which are a product of influences derived from environment, may cause them to think and reason—but not to act—differently.

There are many facts which justify this proposition, but I shall quote in its support only some remarkable observations on the psychology of the English people made by Mr. H. W. Steed, the political editor of *The Times*. The terms which he uses differ from my own, but the theory is the same:—

“Englishmen are guided above all by instinct. They distrust ideas; logic is repugnant to them. . . . An instinct deeper than reason tells them that

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life itself is not logical ; that it is compounded of energy, which is often blind, and which springs from sources that lie below what psychologists call ' the threshold of consciousness.' . . . Close observation of England shows that there is often a flagrant contradiction between ideas and the conduct of the people who express them. Englishmen live in a state of pure inconsistency—and do not know it. . . . Between the two sections of the British mind, the section in which ideas are kept and the section whence proceed the fundamental impulses, there is a division like a watertight compartment. *What an Englishman may say when in a state of normal calm gives no clue to what he will do at a moment of personal or national crisis.* It is then only that he reveals himself, finds his real temperament, speaks little, and acts."

The share assumed by the 'unconscious' in the performance of a so-called voluntary action is therefore considerable, although it generally escapes observation. The unconscious will is often of ancestral origin, but it may also result from momentary feelings and passions and from such other sources as custom, fashion, and the social group to which we belong. These are the influences which many a time tell us what to do without giving us the trouble to think.

3. *The Variations of the Will.*

Whether the will be conscious or unconscious, its dimensions are not unchangeable, for it is apt to undergo unexpected fluctuations. Certain influences

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stimulate it, while others, such as luxury and love of pleasure, tend to depress it.

The decadence of a country sets in from the time that the will begins to weaken and fear of responsibility becomes general, and when a nation has lost its will, like the Romans at the close of the Empire, it disappears from history.

The will plays a preponderant part in international conflicts, for a battle is pre-eminently a struggle of wills, as we see in the memorable example furnished by the battle of the Marne.

In many engagements there comes a critical moment when the result depends solely upon the persistence of the will in one or other of the adversaries. In the battle of the Marne General von Klück's right wing retreated at the very moment when General Maunoury, his opponent, had decided to fall back, and in the battle of the Yser, when the enemy determined to retire after the loss of a hundred and fifty thousand men, he would have secured a victory had he exerted himself only a little longer. "If the Germans had held their ground another quarter of an hour," observes M. F. Nothomb, "they would perhaps have broken through our lines at every point." The same may be said with regard to the battle of the Grand-Couronné, upon the success of which the fate of Nancy depended. General Mallerterre reports that on September 7, 1914, the Commanding Officer of the 314th was instructed to fall back. He refused to do so, but was obliged to obey a written order; and at the exact instant when he started to retire the enemy drew off. This striking series of

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facts shows the preponderant part played by the will during the last moments of a battle.

It is the task of the leaders, such as great warriors, heads of States, and founders of religions, to endow the soul of the masses with the unconscious will, and the more they act in harmony with the ancestral impulses of the nations to whom they address themselves the better they succeed. All famous generals have possessed the power of enhancing the will of their soldiers, and to this stimulation of the collective will many of their victories have been due. Like Napoleon, they know the words, gestures, and actions which increase men's powers and render them invincible.

The capacity of a man who is animated by a strong will is a matter of perpetual astonishment. Not to speak of recent incidents, I shall quote as an example one of Richelieu's remarks, of which M. Clémenceau gives the following summary:—

“When Richelieu seized Port Mahon, he was amazed at the incredible heroism with which the troops scaled a certain position in the face of a murderous hail of grape-shot. He was so much impressed that, in his desire for an explanation of the occurrence, he ordered the same fortification, which was by that time undefended, to be attacked again the next day. But all in vain! Finding no resistance, our soldiers were unable to put forth an effort of the will similar to that which had been aroused in them at the bidding of courage. They required almost insuperable obstacles for the exhibition of their greatest gallantry.”

It is not faith, but will, that is the mover of mountains.

BOOK II
GERMANY'S EVOLUTION IN MODERN
TIMES



CHAPTER I

THE RISE AND DEVELOPMENT OF GERMAN POWER

1. *The History of Prussia*

IN order to gain even a slight knowledge of a nation one must study the genesis of its individual and social mind, as well as its feelings, beliefs, and thoughts, for its political life is only one element of its history.

The factors which are determinative of evolution vary in different nations. Altogether too much importance is accorded to economic factors at the present time ; for, as a matter of fact, their influence varies according to race, environment, institutions, individual or collective actions, and many other conditions besides.

National history is, accordingly, an extremely complex phenomenon, and its significance is difficult to ascertain unless one is dealing with a new nation which has developed under the influence of a small number of fundamental factors, as is precisely the case with Prussia.

An understanding of modern Germany since its absorption by Prussia necessitates a rapid glance at the sources of the mentality which was destined to cause the present war.

Germany has not yet been fifty years united under

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Prussian sway, although many attempts to effect such a junction have been made since the beginning of the Christian era. Frankish, Saxon, Swabian, and Austrian leaders were occasionally able to assemble several German provinces under their rule, and in the twelfth century the Hohenstaufens succeeded in founding an Empire which proved very long lived.

All these undertakings alike ended in failure, and only the future can tell how long the unification established by Prussia will hold its own. It appears as though its existence might be a protracted one, because Prussia's influence upon Germany is much more profound than any previously exerted. It has taken her less than fifty years to gain such an ascendancy over the German mentality that one may well ask whether Prince von Bülow¹ is justified in fearing a revolt of the German spirit against the Prussian monarchy, as he says in one of his books.

I shall have to investigate the mentality produced by Prussian domination in another chapter, and so I shall confine myself here to a brief reminder of the way in which that of the lords of modern Germany was itself formed in days gone by.

The mentality of ancient Prussia resembles that of other nations whose conditions of life have induced them for many hundreds of years to battle with their neighbours for the possession of coveted lands, and whose manners and customs, morality and law are all derived from the imperious desire of making conquests.

¹ Ex-Chancellor of the German Empire.

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Prussia is an artificial State, whose boundaries have been slowly extended by annexations effected at the expense of peoples sprung from various sources. For centuries she has been unwearied in her endeavours to expand, though more than once these attempts have brought serious reverses upon her. This was the case in the year 1640, during the Thirty Years War, when the country was devastated to such an extent that certain districts retained scarcely the half of their inhabitants, and the population of a city like Prenzlau had decreased from six thousand to six hundred. Prussia was at this time almost denuded of inhabitants, and for this reason became the caravansary of the neighbouring nations. Fortunately for her, the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes had driven from France thousands of Protestants, the flower of the working population, and the King of Prussia wisely attracted more than twenty thousand of them to his dominions, which prospered as never before, owing to this influx of immigrants.

The strangers introduced a great number of new industries and agricultural methods into Brandenburg, where they established glass and clock factories, and set up farms and so forth. Berlin, which was a squalid little town whose streets were filled with refuse and litter, and whose population barely reached six thousand souls, became a prosperous city under their influence. The French refugees multiplied rapidly, and in 1740 six hundred thousand of their descendants were living among Prussia's two and a half million inhabitants. Even at the present day great numbers of Prussians are

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of French origin, although many of them have at last Germanized their names.

The Kings of Prussia were always absolute sovereigns of their realm. Long before the day of the modern German philosopher they held that the State was supreme and should make its own laws and morality, and that the sole function of the people was obedience. Frederick I forbade his subjects to argue, which was rather superfluous, as they never dreamed of doing such a thing.

The essential principle of the Prussian monarchy was to extend its territory without cease or pause, and to this end everything else was constantly sacrificed. The Government took no pains then, as it does now, to justify the right to conquer by appealing to an alleged superiority of the Teutonic race, a thing which would have been impossible to claim for a country whose population was racially so diverse; but in those days the theory of ethnic supremacy was replaced by the master's will.

In order to carry out their dreams of conquest the Kings of Prussia devoted the major portion of their resources to the army. Universal military service was made obligatory by law in 1733. When Frederick William I came to the throne the Prussian forces numbered thirty-eight thousand men, while at his death in 1739 they had increased to eighty-three thousand. At the same period France had only one hundred and sixty thousand soldiers and Austria but one hundred thousand. Frederick the Great, William's successor, founded a great Power with the aid of this army, and doubled

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the area of Prussia by annexing Silesia and a part of Poland. The kingdom which had been founded with so much labour was not destroyed until the time of Napoleon, and even then its disintegration was temporary ; for at Leipzig and Waterloo Prussia avenged Jena, and by the treaties of 1815 obtained the Rhine Provinces, with the famous cities of Cologne, Mayence, Treves, and so forth. Sadowa and Sedan completed Prussia's greatness, all the German States submitted to her yoke, and the small kingdom became a mighty Empire.

With their power the pride of the Germans grew apace ; they came at last to believe that they were the greatest nation on the globe, and, as their historians and philosophers alike persuaded them, a privileged race, fore-ordained by the will of Heaven to regenerate the world.

The brief summary which I have just given shows that Prussia was born of conquest and that she has waxed great by conquest alone. Considering this fact, it is marvellous that she should have deceived Europe so long. The French kings were, of course, always rather suspicious of her and thwarted her attempts at German unity, as they did in Richelieu's time, for instance, but still she has been exceedingly popular in France from Voltaire's day to now. By a singular aberration, which shows what a difficult art observation really is, philosophers and writers looked upon her as a Liberal Power. In Danton's eyes Prussia was " our natural ally," for the men of the revolutionary period were equally mistaken. Michelet, too, was very partial to the Prussians and hoped for the

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unity of Germany. "Heaven grant," he said, "that we may behold a great and powerful Germany."

This amazingly trusting attitude lasted until Sadowa. "Logically France goes with Prussia," wrote the most influential of our publicists, and at the same time a great newspaper asserted that "German unity is the triumph of the Revolution, and to be pro-Prussian is to desire the victory of the most just of causes." What delusions!

2. Peaceful Beginnings of the Empire's Policy. The Revival of Warlike Ideas.

During the years which followed the unification of Germany under Prussian domination, Bismarck, as master of the Empire which his devices had founded, thought only of consolidating it by maintaining peace, and the controlling idea of his policy was to secure the support of alliances against any possible temptation of revenge on the part of France. This possibility was always in his mind, and he often mentioned it in his speeches before the Reichstag. The following quotation clearly shows the nature of his preoccupations:—

"The German frontier became a problem when France seized the three cathedral cities of Metz, Toul, and Verdun. It has long been forgotten, and I recall it only because of the historical connection, for we have no intention of reconquering either Toul or Verdun, and Metz we own. But from that time on no generation has arisen in Germany but has been forced to draw the sword against France. Has this period of border war-

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fare with the French nation now come to an end for good and all, or has it not? That is something which neither you nor I can know, and I can but express my own conjecture that it has not come to an end; for this would mean a fundamental alteration in the character of the French nation, as well as in the frontier situation."

As long as Bismarck remained in power his efforts to maintain peace were unceasing, and the present Emperor at first pursued the same policy. The German Empire was consolidated and its economic prosperity became enormous. Its merchant fleet, which grew in importance from day to day, sailed to every part of the world, and found no competitor anywhere except England, the rival who was becoming an object of ever-increasing dread and hatred.

France, whom Bismarck had feared so much, finally ceased to cause Germany any further anxiety, for she seemed so weakened by religious and political dissensions that she could no longer continue in her old ideas of revenge, and though a conflict with her was sometimes considered possible, it was only in case she should become the ally of England, the enemy with whom battle must be done sooner or later.

While Bismarck dominated the State, war was looked upon as a danger to be avoided, but when trade and manufactures began to expand it became an object of desire, as the way to enrich Germany and then to establish her hegemony over the world. This was the time when the military party, the patriotic societies, the Press, and the universities

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united to initiate a campaign whose object was to inflame public opinion and prepare it for war. The Government lent all its strength to aid this movement, which enabled it to work upon the Reichstag's fears of early hostilities, and thus to obtain the taxes necessary for increasing its military effectives.

3. *The Policy of Conquest as Formulated by German Writers.*

One of the authors who helped most to prepare public opinion for the present European conflagration was General von Bernhardi. The translator of his last work, *Unsere Zukunft*, has written *The Book that Caused the War* upon the cover of the English edition ; but this is an obvious over-statement of the facts, for Bernhardi merely popularized opinions which were expressed in most of the German reviews and which were held more especially by the many so-called patriotic societies, whose influence was very strong. Although this work simply upholds ideas which were common property in Germany, it may be of some use to quote a few extracts from it, for they show very plainly that the political conceptions to which Prussia has converted Germany are identical with those which were practically carried out by the early founders of the Prussian monarchy.

The following is a summary of the principal remarks contained in the tenth chapter of Bernhardi's book¹ :—

¹ As the German original could not be had at the time when this book was written, I have used the English edition.

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“ In its undertakings a State should consider only the factor of force, disregarding every law except that of its own advantage.

“ Can we endure that a nation which has only forty million people, and which has already been defeated by Germany, should now dare to prescribe limits to her expansion?

“ We can secure Germany's position on the continent of Europe only if we succeed in smashing the Triple Entente, in humiliating France, and giving her that position to which she is entitled.

“ The Middle-European States which are at present independent must be joined to Germany. . . . Until we have crossed swords with England our foreign policy is condemned to failure.

“ The time chosen for declaring war must depend upon our own free will, and not upon that of our enemies.”

“ Not only army and navy, but our foreign policy also, must be ready for immediate action.”

In a chapter on international arbitration the author attempts to show the difficulty of submitting a point of law to arbitrators :—

“ Might alone and not right is capable of settling disputes between great States. . . . Various persons have various views of justice, and the conception of justice varies, not only in individuals, but also among nations. Every nation has its own standard of justice and its own ideals and aspirations, and these arise necessarily from its character and history. . . . No one can tell whether the one or the other is right.

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"It is impossible to lay down a written law able to regulate all the differences between nation and nation. . . . In every profession and in every nation we find an individual conception of honour. . . . General treaties of arbitration must be particularly pernicious to an ambitious and rising nation, such as Germany, which has not yet reached the highest point in its political and national development. . . . Thus all progress which requires change of territory would be prevented, and the development of strong States would be stopped by the *status quo*—to the advantage of decadent nations.

"One cannot apply the conception of individual morality to that of the State. The morality of the State is a thing by itself. It must be in accordance with its peculiar nature, and be founded upon its character and purpose, exactly as individual morality must be founded upon the personality of the individual and its duties towards Society.

"The essence of the State is power, and its weakness is a sin.

"It is immoral if a State does not strive to extend its power, if such extension is required by an expanding population. . . . Nations must never allow themselves to be bound by treaty obligations which endanger the existence of the State, or are disadvantageous to it."

It is obvious that these ideas clash with the conceptions which we owe to many centuries of European civilization, and carry us back to the principles which guided the small Italian princes

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of Machiavelli's time¹; but, nevertheless, they are traditional in numerous German university circles, as we shall learn in another chapter when we come to study the ideas of this class with regard to the State.

As we see, Bernhardi is not one of those detached and eccentric individuals whom one meets in every country and whose words find no echo anywhere. His writings have been endlessly repeated by literary men of every sort. Here, for instance, are some extracts from a book called *If I were King*, quoted by *Le Correspondant* of September 1914:—

“Since Germany is supreme above all, she has a right to all. Germany aims at the destruction of everything that can obstruct her expansion by blood and iron. England must be destroyed and France must be crushed so that we may take her colonies and such of her territories as are necessary for our safety. The small States of Holland and Belgium must be subjected to the lofty guardianship of Germany; Russia will easily be conquered, and her frontier districts will then become fields for our colonization.”

The following remarks of Herr Scherr, one of Bismarck's panegyrists, clearly indicate the utterly unscrupulous character of the German policy:—

¹ Bernhardi was rather surprised at the indignation aroused by his doctrines among nations who were unaware that he was merely repeating notions which were common property in Germany. He felt obliged to be interviewed and to say that he was misunderstood and had been badly translated; but his text is so clear that it is really not susceptible of many different interpretations.

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"Thoughtful and experienced men should relegate that trite commonplace which tells us that honesty is the best policy to its proper place in a child's spelling-book. There never has been an honest policy in the common meaning of the term, and there never can be. The creative statesman must accomplish his task without troubling his head about whether it is dishonest or prejudicial to his adversaries."

One of the essential characteristics of Prussia's political ideas has always been a profound contempt for weak States, whose right to live she denies. Baron Beyens, who was formerly Belgian Minister at Berlin, relates the following portion of a conversation which he had with the German Minister for Foreign Affairs :—

"He considered that only the Great Powers had the right as well as the power to colonize. He bared his most secret thoughts to me, saying that in view of the changes which were taking place in Europe to the advantage of the more powerful nationalities, small States would not in future be able to enjoy the independent life which they had been allowed to lead hitherto ; that they were fated to disappear or else to be drawn into the orbit of the Great Powers."

This dream of universal domination, which was propagated by Germany's historians, philosophers, and writers, became an ever-increasing hallucination to her people, who, like the Arabs and the Turks of old, grew to consider themselves a superior race that nothing could withstand. In the end all these stimuli were bound to bring their due results.

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Public opinion was metamorphosed, and the War Party grew stronger from day to day.

4. *A Summary of Germany's Political Evolution.*

The history of Germany and her aspirations since she has been united under the domination of Prussia may be summed up in a few lines.

As we have already seen, modern Germany was created by Prussia, which is a kingdom artificially moulded by conquest and owing to conquest all the prosperity it has ever known. After the War of 1870, when Prussia united all the German States under her sway, she naturally imposed upon them the organization to which her own greatness was due.

One of the essential principles of political psychology is to produce and extend certain feelings and then render them collective, for a nation's volition may be regulated by skilfully manipulating its feelings, and by rendering them permanent the national mind can be remade.

Aided by her universities, her historians, her philosophers, and her patriotic societies, but above all by her system of military education, Prussia transformed the mental orientation of the German people in less than fifty years. Her historians persuaded them of their superiority over all the other nations in the world, her philosophers taught them that right was a feeble illusion when confronted by might, her politicians caused visions of universal domination to glitter before their eyes, and her harsh barrack system enslaved their wills.

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In order to dominate the rivals whose growth she was watching, Germany required an army and navy powerful enough to impose her laws in every quarter, and to obtain the credits necessary for these warlike preparations the Government declared that the existence of the Empire was seriously threatened by the hostile attitude of jealous enemies.

England was the foe most dreaded, and the one whom German writers were for ever pointing out to the popular fury as the irreconcilable enemy of Teutonic expansion, with the result that a fleet was built in all haste to destroy the sea-power of this abhorred rival, who was so safe in the protection of the waves.

Now it is a comparatively easy matter to arouse popular passions, but it is extremely difficult to restrain them afterwards, for they soon grow into formidable forces that cannot be subdued. This was exactly what happened to Germany, where the hour was fast approaching when the Government would no longer be master of the passions which it had aroused and of those which inspired the parties that had been formed with the object of inciting the nation to war. At this juncture it became inevitable that the first difficulty which occurred would cause an outbreak of the conflict so ardently desired by many sections of the population.

CHAPTER II

THE STATE ACCORDING TO THE CONCEPTIONS OF THE GERMAN PHILOSOPHERS. THEIR INTER- PRETATION OF HISTORY

1. Origins of the German Conception of the State

THE relations of the individual to the State have always been one of the important problems of politics, but only in a few of the great modern nations has it been possible to establish a satisfactory equilibrium between the powers necessary to the State and the liberty indispensable to its citizens. In the ancient world, or more especially in the Eastern part of it, the question was settled by the simple plan of according unlimited power to the sovereign, who ruled the State.

Given the diverse races which it had to govern and its abiding ambition to annex neighbouring territory, the Prussian Monarchy was obliged to be an absolute one. Its kings believed as a self-evident axiom that nothing could rise superior to the power of the State, whose will should perform the office of morality and law, and whose duty was to extend its dominions by conquest. Moreover, as nothing but the State's own interest could induce it to respect treaties, the Prussian kings were always

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thoroughly convinced that "a good war justifies any cause," as Nietzsche was to write later on.

Various Prussian monarchs acted upon the principles which we have just recapitulated, although of course they did not put them into words ; for it was the philosophers upon whom devolved the task of attempting to furnish a rational basis for theories whose usefulness was demonstrated by the history of their country.

The philosophical principles underlying this conception of the State were first enunciated by such eminent thinkers as Hegel and Fichte, and were then taught by many historians, Treitschke in particular by men of letters like Nietzsche, and by popularizers such as Lasson and Bernhardt. I shall give these authors' own words in explaining the nature of their doctrine, which was destined to bring about the political consequences that have already been pointed out by the quotations in the last chapter.

Hegel was one of the first to construct a clean-cut theory of the absolute right inherent in the State, which, according to his view, was to be worshipped as a god. Might alone he considered the regulative force of history. For a long time these notions were confined to university circles, and it was only much later that they were popularized, and began to be diffused among the great reading public.

The Prussian State could not do otherwise than encourage theories which represented it as a Divine incarnation, superior to all authority, exempt from bondage to any moral law, and possessed of an

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absolute right to conquer the weaker nationalities. But the principles of State Socialism, as thus formulated by the Teutonic philosophers, had a rather offensive air, and so their sponsors attempted to connect them with earlier conceptions by tracing them back to the Romans and endeavouring to show that during the Republic as well as the Empire the State was a superior entity, invested with absolute power. They then sought to represent the German Empire as a mere continuation of the Holy Roman Empire, only liberated from the inferior influences of Catholic Austria. As a matter of fact, the German conception of the State has but the faintest resemblance to the Roman idea, and is far more closely related to the systems of the Asiatic Powers.

This theory of the State is the source of all Prussian organization and history, not because the above-mentioned principles were formulated, but far more because their practical application made them penetrate so deeply into men's minds that they became incentives to action.

2. The Absorption of the Individual by the State.

The complete absorption of the individual by the State is a necessary consequence of these German theories, and as a matter of fact this is just what has happened, first in Prussia and then throughout the Empire. The State provides for everything and manages everything, and its bureaucratic systematization, which would seem intolerable elsewhere, is here endured because all Germans are

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accustomed by their exceedingly severe military system to a passive obedience that is reinforced by their inherited submissiveness. According to Hegel's idea, the Germans look upon the State as a divinity which every one is happy to obey. "The State," says Novalis, "is a mystic person whose organs, so to speak, are the tribunals, the theatre, the court, the Government, and public assemblies."

This divinity merely requires obedience from the people, not rational assent, for she is superior to praise and blame alike, according to the theory of the philosophers. But in any case, it is seldom that any one dreams of criticizing her, for the bureaucratic organization of Prussia inspires its subjects with so much admiration that they now long to impose it upon all mankind.

In France we look upon the State as an entity which is quite apart from ourselves, and of which we occasionally make use in order to obtain some favour or as a prop to support our weakness, but we always consider it as more or less of an enemy. To the German, however, the State is the incarnation of his race, and to contend against it would be like contending against himself.

But no matter what the reasons are, the State's prestige in Germany is enormous, for its worship is firmly established in the souls of men, and the authorities have not the slightest difficulty in securing implicit obedience. While the French and English are eager for liberty, the German loves to obey. He has a passion for tyranny, and the

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moment the tiniest scrap of authority comes his way he takes his turn at playing tyrant too.

Utter slavery is required of the common soldier, as is plain from the following address, which the Kaiser delivered to the recruits at Potsdam in 1891: "Body and soul you belong to me. If I command you to shoot your fathers and your mothers . . . you must follow my command without a murmur." To what civilized nation except the Germans would the head of a State have dared to make such a speech?

The submissiveness of the Germans makes it an easy matter to govern them, for the rules and regulations that Frenchmen are so apt to break are always obeyed in Germany, where such a disturbance as arose over the Hôtel Astoria in Paris simply could not happen. It will be remembered that this hotel was constructed by a German, who was well aware how easily the laws may be evaded in France, and accordingly made the structure a great deal taller than was permitted by the building regulations. Had this occurred in Germany the offending stories would have been demolished within twenty-four hours, if by some unlikely chance they had been allowed to be built. But in France, although decisions have been handed down by the Prefecture of the Seine, the Municipal Council, and the Council of State ever since 1907, the hotel is still in its place, visibly exemplifying the small prestige of the French Government and its inability to secure respect for its regulations.

The divagations of certain Teutonic scholars during the war ought of course not to be con-

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sidered as interpreting public opinion with absolute accuracy, but nevertheless it is just as well to take cognizance of them when their authors are sufficiently representative. It is on this ground that I quote the following reflections of Professor Ostwald :—

“Owing to Germany’s capacity for organization she has reached a higher stage of civilization than the other nations. Of our enemies, the Russians are still in the nomad period, while the French and English have just arrived at that point of cultural development which we ourselves had left behind us more than fifty years ago, and which we call individualism. Above this stage, however, lies that of organization, where Germany stands to-day. You ask me what Germany wants. Well, Germany wants to organize Europe, for Europe has not been organized hitherto. Germany wants to strike out in a new path where she may realize the idea of collective labour.”

This declaration must delight the Collectivist Socialists, but it will hardly appeal to the enlightened minds of those who know that progress and great discoveries are the work of the chosen few, not of collectivities.

It is only when average minds require to be utilized that one sees the advantages of collective organization. It has been extremely beneficial to the Germans, whose disciplined and gregarious nature makes joint enterprise easy and individual labour difficult. But in any case, organization has completely deprived them of personality, as we shall show elsewhere, when we take the opportunity of

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pointing out how forcibly those who have inspected many German prisoners during the war have been impressed by their identity of thought. Officers and private soldiers alike all seem as though they were cast in one and the same mould.

State Socialism has taken on a mystic form among the Germans, and is accepted as a religious dogma by their writers. Professor Eduard Meyer of the University of Berlin thus contrasts the German and English ideas of the State :—

“As a matter of fact, we are here concerned with two diametrically opposed conceptions of the State, and with their life-and-death struggle in this frightful war. . . .

“The difference affects not only the English and German conceptions of the State, but the ideas of liberty formed by each of these nations. Liberty to the Englishman means the unbounded right of the individual to pursue his own material interests undisturbed by any interference from the State, and his submission to the will of the majority, or *public opinion*, with regard to everything else : point of view, manners and customs, and habits of life. Liberty to the German, on the other hand, signifies subordination to the interests of the collectivity and the ideal aims of his nation. The Englishman looks upon the State as an instrument of compulsion, whose rights and demands, as they affect the individual, must be limited as far as possible, while the German regards the State as an organism which pre-eminently embodies the loftiest aims that his nation has set before it, whose sphere of authority should embrace and vivify the whole of national

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life, and whose injunctions are of such a nature that every individual, in his quality as a member of the great whole, transforms them into free manifestations of his own volition, and thus elevates them to the dignity possessed by moral sanctions of free submission and free accomplishment of duty. This is why the German looks upon universal military service as at once the foundation and highest expression of the free national State, while the Englishman considers it the greatest abomination and a form of despotic coercion which subverts his idea of liberty" (*Scientia*, March 1, 1915).

Nothing could be clearer than this statement, which plainly shows us the system that a victorious Germany is prepared to force upon Europe, as she has already forced it upon Alsace. The individual must yield passive obedience, but he is permitted to believe that such obedience is "a free manifestation of his will." The same mental illusion would have persuaded a slave in antiquity that he was obeying a free decision of his own when he was grinding at a mill in the depths of some dark cellar.

No nation could be so servile in its obedience unless it had been broken in by generations of barrack life. No Englishman or American would ever tolerate the German system, for they believe that the State is made for the individual, and not the individual for the State, and they hold that liberty and independence are far superior to passive submission.

It has been justly observed that there is a close resemblance between the theories of State Socialism

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as conceived by the German philosophers, and those of the French Democratic Socialists, who would perhaps formulate their ideas differently, but who have always carried them out energetically when chance has enabled them to do so. But there is a remarkable difference between the two theories, for the German one is extremely practical and imbued with an abiding desire of conquest, while the French is mainly theoretical, as we see from the fact that, in spite of its extremely authoritative tendencies, it has taught pacifism and universal brotherhood towards all except those classes of the population whom it has persecuted with remarkable energy.

3. The Worship of Might.

The conception of the State described above necessarily implies a preponderance of physical force, but no philosophical dissertations were needed to make the Prussian monarchs grasp the advantages which this entailed, for as their kingdom had been founded by might, so by might alone could it hold its own and continue to grow.

In order to justify the results obtained, German authors were therefore naturally impelled to represent physical force as the great dominating factor of history, and to demonstrate that the success which alone reveals a nation's worth belongs to the strong.

Since might is lord supreme, it need show no compassion, for, as German philosophers and historians have not ceased to reiterate, it is free to act as it likes. "The power of the conqueror makes the law," writes the famous jurist Ihering. And

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Nietzsche, the exponent of current opinion, said :
" Master-morality asserts that one's only duties are towards one's equals. One may act as one pleases in every way, and as one's heart dictates, towards beings of a lower order and towards everything that is foreign. For a strong man there is nothing more dangerous than pity."

When we quote the instructions of the German General Staff in another chapter, we shall have an opportunity of showing how strictly these principles are applied, and to what an extent all that is humane is rigorously excluded from them.

It is plain to see how far a cry it is from these doctrines to those with which Christianity, or even the mere progress of civilization, has come to inspire the majority of civilized nations. Germany has remained nominally Christian, but she has converted the gentle Jesus of the Bible into a deity as savage as her ancient Odin, whose ceaseless aim was conquest and massacre. This new Christianity, which has a very pagan air, absolutely rejects biblical morality, which it considers " slave - morality," according to Nietzsche's formula. Mildness, sensibility, and humaneness are looked upon as forms of weakness. Might makes right. The strongest nation has the right to dominate all the rest, and owes them no debt of kindness or goodwill. All German intellectuals are imbued with the principle of the characteristic saying which has been attributed to William II : " Humaneness ends this side of the Vosges, as far as I am concerned." It was inevitable that maxims of this sort should lead to the cold-blooded atrocities which have furnished

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the world with such an afflicting spectacle in the present war.

This worship of might naturally began to make its way among the German people only when the fortunate issue of their enterprises showed them that they were strong ; but from that time on their new school of theorists has been persuading them that they are a superior race, and that it is their duty to conquer the world. War has become a crusade for the crushing of the inferior nations, which might oppose Germany's mission in the world ; for the German ideal must reign supreme over the wreck of all such lower races, after their Teutonic conquerors have painstakingly stripped them of their wealth.

It is just as well to laud one's instincts when one cannot dominate them ; for they can then be obeyed without discredit. On this principle the German philosophers were wise to exalt the most unworthy aspirations of their fellow-countrymen, particularly their instincts of conquest, slaughter, and rapine.

4. The Relations between Religion and the State.

Even in monarchies which are the most absolute in form, State and Church are generally two independent powers, and although they sometimes disagree, it is seldom indeed that one is entirely subordinated to the other. German ideas with regard to the absolute power of the State, however, made it impossible for the founders of the Prussian Monarchy to tolerate any form of religious authority

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which might counterpoise their own, and, as a matter of fact, it was never necessary that they should, for the Protestant faith is almost always thrown into the background by the temporal power, and rarely comes into conflict with it. But after the war of 1870, when Prussia's domination was expanded so as to include the whole of Germany, she found that she had twenty-five million Catholic subjects to rule beside forty million Protestants. In spite of his great skill, Bismarck was unable to solve the difficult problems that arose, and after he had contended against them for a certain length of time was obliged to resign himself to a series of compromises. The disputes nevertheless grew more acrimonious from day to day, and although their disappearance has been brought about by the present war, it can only be temporary, for Germany's two religions will always render her complete unification very difficult.

The twenty-five million Catholics play a really important part in Imperial politics, for although the Government is absolute at bottom, still it must submit to a Parliament whose votes sometimes embarrass it, especially on the question of taxation. The Catholics control a large number of reviews and newspapers, which are not particularly amenable to the suggestions of the Government. They form what is called the Party of the Centre in the Reichstag, and can obtain a majority by allying themselves to certain opposition groups, as they did, for instance, in 1909, when their votes caused the resignation of the then Chancellor, Prince von Bülow.

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The Catholic Party is naturally not at all popular in Government circles, and indeed a Secretary of State once declared in a parliamentary speech that it was "a purulent abscess in the organism of the Empire." But it is so strong that it requires no outside aid to combat the all-powerful Prussian State, which, like the Protestant Church, has the King of Prussia for its only master, while the Catholic Party acknowledges two heads, the Emperor and also the Pope, who is the representative of God on earth, and as such ranks high above the temporal sovereign.

The Protestant Party has small inclination to yield to the Catholics, because it is convinced that Germany owes her greatness to the Protestant spirit, as many historians have taught. We shall quote elsewhere a passage from Treitschke on this important point.

The religious dualism of Germany will probably prove a source of weakness to her sooner or later.

5. *How German Theorists explain their Ideas with regard to the State and the Law.*

A reader unfamiliar with German philosophers and historians might fancy that I had exaggerated their opinions, and yet from Hegel to Treitschke and Bernhardt all their ideas are presented again and again in the same terms. I shall quote from these authors in another portion of this work, and for the present I shall confine myself to a few extracts which summarize their views perfectly, and which are taken from a book by Professor Lasson,

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of the University of Berlin. It appeared in a popular edition several years before the war, and quotations from it have already been given in the *Temps* :—

“ Unless a State is to disappear it cannot logically recognize as its superior any tribunal whose decisions it is bound to accept. As between States there can be nothing but war, for strife is the very essence and rule of international relations, while friendship is merely an accident and an exception.

“ As long as there are men endowed with free-will, coercion alone can insure the enforcement of the law. . . . When a controversy takes place and the adversary's opposition is broken down, the resulting state of affairs is as respectable as the one which preceded it.

“ There is no law between States, for law is simply infinitely superior power, so that a State which should recognize law confesses its own weakness and degenerates into a community existing on sufferance and making a grotesque parade of being a State, without the power of exercising its essential function, which consists in repelling coercion by force. A small State has no right to exist save in proportion to its powers of resistance, for the only law between States is the law of the stronger.

“ In spite of all treaties the weaker is the prey of the stronger whenever the latter is able to exercise his power and desires to do so, and as this condition of things is reasonable one may go so far as to call it moral.

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"If we look at States as intelligent beings, we see that disputes which arise between them can be settled only by physical force. . . . In order to suppress war the State itself would have to be suppressed.

". . . . To be unprepared for war is a sign of a nation's physical and moral decay.

". . . . No matter what progress a nation may have made in the intellectual, moral, or material spheres, all its labour will be in vain, and it will become the 'manure of civilization' for other people, unless it is able to defend itself and safeguard the results it has achieved.

"Everything is at stake when war breaks out, for every war is a question of life and death. . . . It would be as weak to show consideration as it would be pitiable to expect it.

"A war of conquest is quite as just as a war of defence. It is folly to resent a war of conquest. The object of the conquest is the only interesting point.

"War may be waged for political interests, but never for the sake of an idea, since this would mean the subversion of all the healthy foundations which underlie the life of the State.

"The national State, which realizes the civilization of the race in its highest form, can realize itself only by the destruction of other States.

"The right to be independent is not one which is innate in any nation, but has to be acquired with toil and trouble. . . . A highly civilized nation, but one whose civilization is unfavourable

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to concentration and the military activities of the State, should justly be made to obey a barbarian who possesses a more highly developed political and military organization. . . .

"Between different forms of civilization there can be only strife and hatred.

"Interference with the affairs of others is a right which is only limited by the power these others possess.

"The weak are apt to flatter themselves that the treaties which protect their wretched lives are inviolable; but the only real guarantee is adequate military power.

"There are people who talk about a so-called right of nations to dispose of themselves; but to permit a nation, or still worse, a part of a nation, to settle such international questions as, for instance, whether it shall belong to one State or another, would be like allowing the children of a household to vote upon the choice of a father. It is the most frivolous illusion that ever came from a Frenchman's brain."

Right without might would be a feeble defence indeed against nations which avow maxims such as these. Let us leave the academicians to discuss the beauty of abstract right, and to combat the religion of might with the religion of right; but let us advise the rest of the citizens always to maintain means of defence that are more trustworthy than theories.

I should think that the experience we are passing through ought to be enough to teach the young men whom the idle dreams of shallow pacifists have

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deceived that the only way to make people respect their rights is to be very strong.¹

He who has only right to support him cannot overcome might. During the course of history many priests, who were totally destitute of military strength, have indeed successfully asserted their rights against the wishes of mighty monarchs, but they were by no means without power, even though they had no soldiers. On the contrary, their strength was immense, because they made their enemies fear the succour God might give them as His earthly representatives.

The German theories unquestionably belong to periods of civilization which we have long outgrown. They carry us back to those distant days when every sovereign scorned the treaties which he could break, and counted only upon his trusty sword. A German journalist, who was impregnated with ideas about the rights of the stronger, said that Germany need not pay any of her foreign obligations in case she won. Of course she need not, but one wonders what country would be willing to have business dealings with a nation inspired by such principles. At present the military organiza-

¹ I may be permitted to recall the fact that in several of my works I have laid great stress upon the mistakes of the pacifists, and the necessity for a nation, which desires a continued existence, to go so well armed that it can defend its rights. Mine seemed to be a voice crying in the wilderness, although perhaps this was not entirely the case, for M. Henri Gall, the learned President of the *Société des ingénieurs de France*, wrote me on the 8th December, 1914: "How often I think of your great influence on the present generation, which must now have a clearer understanding about the advantages of power, an idea it owes to you."

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tion of the German State is entirely out of touch with its industrial and commercial development ; they are two distinct phases of civilization, superposed one upon the other.

It has been justly said that the burning of Louvain and the devastation of Belgium are the results of the German theories, and Mommsen's very true remark has been quoted in this connection :—

“ Have a care lest intellect disappear from this State, which has been both a military and an intellectual power, and lest naught but an exclusively military State be left.”

Europe has been forced to be under arms for forty-five years, as one of the first effects of these German theories, which were only to end in the universal conflagration that will at last show how mistaken have been the conceptions entertained by the Teutonic philosophers.

CHAPTER III

THE ECONOMIC EVOLUTION OF GERMANY

1. *Germany's Industrial and Commercial Prosperity*

A POOR nation carrying on war for the purpose of enriching itself at the expense of its neighbours is a phenomenon occasionally witnessed in history, and one of which the Prussian Monarchy long furnished a striking example. But very seldom does a country which has become wealthy by the expansion of its foreign commerce, and which is protected from all possible attacks by a powerful army, plunge into a war from which it can derive no profit, whether it wins or loses. Such is, however, the case with modern Germany. Her prosperity is no more than twenty-five years old, but in that short period her population, trade, and commerce have all increased considerably, and yet in spite of this she has gone to war at the very time when her economic development was overtaking that which England had been almost a century in attaining.

The following figures and documents will give a clear idea of Germany's industrial and commercial expansion at the beginning of the European War.

Her population increased from forty-eight millions in 1888 to almost seventy millions in

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1914; her national wealth in the same period rose from 10,000 millions sterling to 14,880 millions,¹ her commerce reached every corner of the globe, and though she had few colonies of her own the whole world was gradually coming to supply their places to her.

Side by side with the military Germany as represented by Prussia, an industrial Germany had developed within a few years, and had made up the start gained by England and America.

Among the various factors which contributed to the development of her industries, the most important was the discovery of coal-mines, whereby her output of this mineral was raised from twenty-six million tons in 1870 to more than 190 million in 1913, in which year the French output did not exceed forty-one million tons.²

The extraction of coal, which had formerly

¹ According to the *Reveil National* of April 1915, this is how the German economists estimated their country's wealth. I give the figures without guaranteeing their accuracy:—

1. Private wealth, real and personal, 8,800 millions sterling.
2. Municipal property, with or without buildings, 2,000 millions;
3. Rural property, 2,000 millions.
4. Private mining enterprises, 240 millions.
5. Value of German capital invested abroad and of foreign securities owned by Germans, 1,000 millions.
6. Mines owned by the State, State institutions, public buildings, ports, and canals, 600 millions.
7. Bills in circulation, silver and currency, 240 millions.

This gives a total of 14,880 millions sterling. The annual revenue of Germany is supposed to be about 1,600 millions.

² Of this amount twenty-seven million tons are produced in departments now under enemy occupation, which has also deprived us of three-quarters of our output of iron.

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enriched England, was destined to make Germany prosperous too, for she was able to export a share of her supply, whereas France was obliged to import a part of what she consumed.

Properly to understand the significance of the preceding figures, one must take into consideration the wealth which they represent. In the industrial phase through which the world is now passing, the wealth of a nation is pre-eminently the product of the quantity of mechanical energy at its disposal. This may be derived from the labour of man, which, until quite recently, was its only source, or else it may be generated by labour produced from the combustion of coal.

Many different experiments prove that a labourer produces forty-three and two-tenths foot-pounds of work per second, during an eight-hour day. If the same amount of work is obtained from coal consumed in a steam-engine, it costs about one and a half pounds of coal, or, calculating the amount for a year of three hundred working days, it costs 450 lb., or about one-fifth of a ton. A ton of coal accordingly represents the annual labour of five men, and a million tons that of five million men; so when we say that Germany mines 190 million tons of coal annually, we mean that she can produce the same mechanical labour that would be furnished by 950 million workmen, or perhaps we had better say, docile slaves.

These docile coal-slaves are, moreover, very economical, for a million tons of coal at 12s. the ton are ordinarily worth £600,000, while if we calculate the wages of each separate human labourer

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at 4s. per day, or £60 for three hundred days, the five million human labourers required to take the place of a million tons of coal would cost £300,000,000 sterling. By substituting the labour of the coal-workman for that of the human workman, the former costs only 2s. 5d. per year, instead of £60,¹ so that an addition to the wealth of a country in terms of coal really amounts to an enormous increase in the number of its inhabitants. A large coal-supply and a small population are better than a small coal-supply and a large population, for the annual labour of five thousand miners will extract a million tons of coal, which, in turn, are capable of doing the work of five million labourers.

All the products of modern industry, from our gigantic battleships to the howitzer shells that plough through the trenches, represent coal transformed into energy, and the more coal one owns, the more factories, railways, battleships, munitions, and cannons one may have.

Germany's enormous output of coal has produced such effects upon her economic and international life that it is undoubtedly one of the greatest factors in her recent development.

The first of these effects was the abandonment of agriculture in favour of the factory. Germany's surplus coal-supply and excess population enabled her to manufacture articles so cheaply as to defy

¹ As the results of my calculations may appear surprising at first sight, I have had them verified by my learned friend M. Ch. Lallemand, who is a member of the *Académie des Sciences* and General Inspector of Mines.

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competition ; her exports increased accordingly, and her factories had to be enlarged until they finally came to assume gigantic proportions. Some of them, like Krupp's, employ a hundred thousand operatives, the Mannesmann works fifteen thousand, the Badische eight thousand, and Bayer's almost as many. Most of these establishments had set up branches in different countries, in order to avoid customs duties. This was done by the Darmstadt firm of Merck, which manufactured the greater part of the remedies sold by French chemists and had auxiliaries in London, and at Montereau near Paris.

These different establishments are very ably organized. Bayer's has fourteen managers, under whose orders are 304 chemists, sixty - seven engineers, eight physicians, four lawyers, and more than 650 technical workers, including mechanics, electricians, and so forth. The workshops are lighted by thirty thousand electric lamps, and send out thirty vans of finished product every day.

The Germans excel equally in all branches of industry, such as the making of laboratory instruments, photographic lenses, etc., and French manufacturers no longer attempt to compete with them.

Germany's success caused an incessant increase in her production, which assumed such proportions that she was constantly obliged to seek new markets. This was really one of the indirect causes of the war, for as a new-comer in the industrial world, she found herself confronted at every turn by rivals, chief among whom was England, and before long she aspired to give them battle.

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This industrial hypertrophy had, however, a very dangerous aspect, and one which was quite obvious. Herr Helfferich, the great German financier, asserts that the revenue of the Empire is 2,000 millions sterling, and the national wealth 16,000 millions. We may accept these figures, although they are probably exaggerated. But what do they really represent? They represent capital that has been sunk in enormous manufacturing establishments whose output is too large for home consumption. and must therefore be sold abroad. The closing of the foreign markets would plunge millions of workmen into distress, for as a matter of fact only fifteen million Germans live by agriculture, out of the population of seventy millions. The prosperity of the manufacturing establishments and the profits which they may be in a position to distribute among their shareholders are therefore entirely dependent upon ability to sell their products, for otherwise they have no income, and thus, as has been justly remarked, Germany was compelled to go on heaping up wealth or else to lose what she had.

Dazzled by their success, the manufactories went on perpetually expanding, as may be seen in the case of the General Electric Company, which was founded in 1883 with a capital of five million marks, and which now has to pay interest on a capital of 240 millions. It is obvious that production must not slacken for an instant if dividends are to be declared on this vast capitalization.

This is why Germany went in such terror of her rivals, and why she so bitterly hated England, the most dangerous of them all.

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2. *Various Causes of Germany's Prosperity. Her Industrial Methods.*

As we have just seen, Germany's prosperity in recent years was chiefly due to the unexpected discovery of immense coal-mines within her territory; but this was not the sole cause, for there were several others, some of them real and the rest imaginary. Among the imaginary causes was the notion that the economic success of Germany was a result of her military good fortune in 1870, an error which is always cropping out, although it has often been disproved. It has now been attacked again in a recent article by M. d'Avenel, who has no difficulty in showing that wealth and domination are independent of one another, and that military supremacy has never enlarged a nation's commerce. Military power is not possessed at all by some very wealthy countries, such as the United States, Holland, and Switzerland. Neither is there any foundation for the belief that Germany was enriched by the £200,000,000 sterling which France paid her in 1871, because the armed peace which she has maintained for forty-five years has cost her more than £2,400,000,000. Even aside from this, her position was by no means brilliant during the first eight or ten years after the war of 1870, which indeed retarded rather than accelerated the movement of industrial and commercial expansion that was developing throughout almost the whole of Europe.

Among the real—very real—causes of Germany's industrial prosperity must be mentioned first of all

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her superior technical education and the habits of discipline, order, and method instilled by her system of military education. The factory and the barracks are much alike, and a German passes easily from one to the other.

The influence of barrack life is proclaimed by the Germans themselves, as appears from the following words, which Professor Below of Freiburg quotes from an economist :—

“ It is to the spirit of discipline prevalent in the German army that we owe our economic advance, which has excited the hatred of England against us. The military system is a school for our working-classes.”

I am quite prepared to admit that the habits of discipline and regularity inculcated by the rigid system of the barracks, which is endurable to Germans only, have been most useful to them ; but how have they utilized the qualities thus acquired, and what are their industrial and commercial methods?

In several of my previous works¹ I have explained the latter, and have shown the functions of the cartells, the way in which different countries have been commercially invaded, and so forth. M. Millioud, a learned economist, has undertaken the same investigation in the *Bibliothèque Universelle* of Geneva for April 1915, and as his observations are similar to my own, and he is moreover a scholar who belongs to a neutral nation, I shall summarize them here.

¹ *Psychologie du socialisme*, seventh ed., and *Psychologie politique*, ninth ed.

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M. Millioud begins by showing the increase of German expansion, especially in certain countries like Belgium, where penetration was effected by means of agents and the purchase of one mercantile establishment after the other, either by dealing directly or under borrowed names.

The powerful system of the cartell, which is an association of all persons engaged in a certain kind of manufacture and which is managed by an office that regulates prices, collects profits, and subsequently distributes them among the members, enables German manufacturers to ruin their competitors by selling goods even below cost price. M. Millioud shows, for instance, that the German metallurgists who sell iron girders at 130 marks the ton in Germany, deliver them for 120 marks in Switzerland, and 75 in Italy, losing about 20 marks in the latter case.

By means of reductions like these, and by granting very long credits of from twelve to eighteen months, German merchants secure customers in every country, and when they have rid themselves of competition are able to make what prices they like. The German Government backs the manufacturing industries with all its power, both as a customer, and still more by favouring the export trade of the country through an ingenious system of differential tariffs.

The employment of such methods requires a large amount of money, the source of which it is interesting to trace. Germany's industrial and commercial system has been assisted by her bankers, who first drained the savings of their own country and then

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those of France (the latter through the medium of credit obtained from French financial institutions), and subsequently invested the proceeds in various industrial undertakings. When even this money proved inadequate it was found necessary to replace it by certificates of stock, which meant that the cash reserves of the banks were reduced to commercial paper extremely difficult to negotiate.

Herein are seen the defects and dangers of this system, for although confidence may no doubt sometimes be substituted for a freely available metallic reserve, this is not always so, and especially not in the event of a crisis, as the resounding collapse of some of these institutions has sufficiently demonstrated. Nor is this the only danger. The dividends paid upon the enormous capital invested in business undertakings require, as I have said, a perpetual increase of production, and in Germany this was carried to a point which far outstripped demand. It then became necessary to dominate the great markets of the world, so as to regulate the distribution of products and control prices; but here the Germans came into collision with various competitors, chief among them England, whose trade was growing almost as fast as Germany's own.

The author whom I have just quoted reaches the following conclusion :—

“ The Germans felt themselves menaced on all sides, though no one was really threatening them. They protested that they were fighting for their existence, and this was perfectly true, for their manufacturers, financiers, and statesmen had

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launched them upon an adventure of economic conquest in such a way and by such operations that they could not draw back. But their actions recoiled upon their own heads, and even before they could be said to have failed they saw clearly that victory was escaping them. Then came the question whether to await defeat, the stoppage of trade and the ruin of credit, with all the terrible distress which would result to the nation, and the furious passions to which the populace might give way. The Germans must have asked themselves whether the situation did not render war inevitable, sooner or later, and whether it was not better to begin hostilities while there was still the best chance of a swift and decisive victory. Afterwards—well, right belongs to the victor, as Maximilian Harden says.”

I dare say the economic reasons which have just been pointed out would have forced the Germans to make war one day, for their writers have said this sort of thing so often that we cannot doubt it; but I do not believe that the time had yet come when the necessity had begun to make itself felt. It was merely drawing closer, as M. Bonnefon remarks :—

“ A month before the war broke out, Herr Ballin, the President of the Hamburg-America Steamship Company, and one of the Kaiser’s intimate advisers, uttered an exclamation of alarm so prophetic that it deserved the attention of the whole French Press. He ejaculated bitterly that Germany’s foreign markets were everywhere shrinking to smaller proportions or else disappearing entirely.

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If he was right it meant failure for a great number of the smaller concerns, and unemployment for millions of operatives — in a word, the inevitable consequence of over-hasty effort in a Germany that was not great enough to bear it. There were a hundred thousand unemployed workmen in Berlin before the war began, and manufacturers found it difficult to borrow money even at 8 per cent."

Germany's prosperity was real enough, but we can see that it was beginning to be seriously menaced.

3. German Commercial Expansion in France and the other Countries of the World.

In spite of all the dangers which I have just indicated, Germany's prosperity continued to increase, and she was competing with the other nations in every quarter of the globe.

Pecuniary profit is not the only consequence of commercial rivalry, for it is no exaggeration to say that a nation will sooner or later dominate another by an industrial invasion quite as much as by military conquest. More and more was this becoming true of the Germans in many countries, in Belgium, Russia, and France especially. They had gained possession of entire districts, like the Côte d'Azur, for instance, where every large hotel from Saint Raphael to the Italian border had become German. It was a general invasion. Large numbers of French manufactures, such as chemicals, optical instruments, medicines, dyes, and so forth, were in German hands. Germans were gradually

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getting hold of the chief French manufactured products by virtue of their spirit of organization, their business methods, their technical education, and their persevering labour. The seizures effected during the war prove that there were twelve thousand German firms in France, and if they had kept on at the same rate for twenty years longer no battle would have been needed to make them the real owners of the country.

Similar phenomena were taking place in Italy and Russia, where most of the banks and large manufacturing establishments were under German management. The invasion of England had also begun, but to a far less extent than elsewhere.

Germany was rapidly carrying out her commercial invasion of the world, as we see, and but for the war it would soon have been accomplished. The fact that Russia was becoming more and more German was shown in a very alarming way, after the Russian defeats, by certain speeches made in the Duma. They are summarized in the following article from the *Journal de Genève* of September 12, 1915:—

“Everything that has been said about the economic enterprise of the Germans in other countries is outdone by what has happened to Russia, in whose conquest they had made very great progress when the war broke out. The traditional indolence of the Government, all too many of whose representatives were quite as willing to take their baksheesh in marks as in roubles, doubtless contributed to this state of things, as well as the consuming activity displayed by the agents of

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German undertakings, both public and private. The banks were for the most part German, the commercial houses were German, as were also the mining industries, and many of the large manufacturing establishments. The German colonies, which were planted in the country districts a century and a half ago by the Empress Catherine, have lost none of their national characteristics, but consist of isolated groups, ignorant of the Russian language and situated, as though by chance, in the zone of our fortresses and along the principal lines of our strategic communications. Their relations with the Pan-German organizations have increased during the last few years and are becoming more and more intimate. Their conduct is most suspicious at the present time. German influences are more alarming still at Court, in the various ministries and in the army, and many of our speakers have denounced the condescension shown in high quarters for German and Austrian subjects."

If a colony is to be defined as a country which is profitably exploited by another, we must acknowledge that France, Belgium, and Russia were great German colonies.

In their attempts to win new markets the Germans did not confine themselves to the commercial invasion of Europe, however, but more and more overspread all the rest of the world, and not only was their progress very rapid, but it also resulted in an expansion of the invaders' language and civilization.

Professor Bellesort, who was in Japan when the war broke out, writes :—

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" I had just returned to Japan after an absence of fifteen years, and the first change that I noticed upon my arrival made me sick at heart. The Germans had almost entirely supplanted us. English influence in Japan had remained comparatively stationary, but what we had lost Germany had gained.

" Our military schools, our teachers, our books, our methods, and our language had formerly been held in high esteem ; but now German professors, German books, the German army, the German language, German methods, and German science were omnipresent. In the Law School at Tokio a hundred students followed the lectures of the French professor, while a thousand were enrolled under his German colleague. Out of twenty-four students who were travelling on European scholarships, nineteen were destined for Berlin, and the five who were going to Paris were to reside in Germany as well. When a Russian Chair was founded, it meant that a French Chair was suppressed, never a German one. European medicine and music were both entirely German."

The author attributes Germany's success to her activity in flooding the country with newspapers, reviews, and agents of all sorts, but he also censures the serious mistakes of the fanatic democrats who were then governing France. Their religious persecutions had caused the French missions, which taught the French language and opposed anti-French influences, to be replaced by German Jesuits, who founded a German University at Tokio, and thus gave the Japanese Press the opportunity of

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saying, "Henceforth the Catholics of the Far East will be under the protection of the German Emperor."

The French Marists had eight hundred students in their college, where the study of French was obligatory; but the suppression of their houses in France made it impossible for them to secure any recruits, and they could get no more new professors with whom to replace the old ones.

It is not alone in Japan, however, that Germany has forged ahead and France has fallen behind. The same author says:—

"Wherever I have travelled during the last twenty years, whether in Europe, in America, or in the Far East, I have encountered the insolent, hateful, and dishonest German. He has not been satisfied with taking advantage of our mistakes, as it was his right to do, but he has been as adroit in falsifying our history as in counterfeiting our products. Everywhere I have heard him proclaiming or insinuating the idea of our decadence. University professors, Hamburg merchants, diplomats, and emigrants have all alike been equally contemptuous of the truth where we were concerned, and have brought an absolutely amazing amount of discipline to their unfairness and dishonesty. But only in Japan has it been my lot to revisit a country where we once occupied a very honourable position and to ascertain how much prestige and moral authority these last fifteen years have robbed us of. Never have I had a similar opportunity of estimating the results of the incessant work which has been carried on against us, and of the way

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in which we have renounced our rights, one after the other.

"As soon as I quitted France, that turbulent and superheated centre where the noise and passion of our wranglings deceive us in regard to our activities, I became aware that in every part of the world the war of 1870 was still being waged implacably, that we were still retreating, and that such a state of affairs could not continue. Anything is better than slow disintegration."

Similar phenomena of expansion have been observed everywhere. The *Revue de Paris* of March 1, 1915, called attention to the fact of Germany's political meddling with the domestic affairs of Persia, where the intrigues of her diplomatic advisers and commercial travellers were constantly fomenting disturbances and separatist plots.

In spite of her world-wide commerce and increasing expansion, Germany fancied that she had not "her place in the sun," and announced that she was ready to fight any nation which attempted to enlarge its colonial possessions, as France was endeavouring to do in Morocco. And yet her experience in Africa demonstrated that she had never been able to found any flourishing colony, in spite of the torrents of blood she shed; for as a plain merchant the German makes himself acceptable the world over, but as a master he is detested by every creature subjected to his sway.

CHAPTER IV

THE MODERN GERMAN MENTALITY

1. *Origins of the Modern German Mentality*

THE German mentality of the present time is an artificial product which is less than half a century old, for it dates back only to the unification of Germany by Prussia. The fact of its emergence does not at all imply that the nation constitutes a homogeneous race, but merely that it has acquired a small number of common dominants which are superposed upon the faculties of quite heterogeneous racial groups. As a matter of fact, modern Germany is a mixture of very different peoples, for Slavs, Celts, and Mongols, men of Baden, Prussia, and Württemberg, as well as Bavarians and Saxons, have all contributed partial and totally unlike characteristics.¹ Political unification and its consequences, however, have rapidly produced a

¹ Anthropologists long ago ascertained the origin of the present inhabitants of Germany and showed of what a mixture they are composed. The substratum of the Prussian population is of Slav origin—the Mecklenburgers, Brandenburgers, and Pomeranians are a hybrid race derived from crossings with the Great Russians or the Little Russians, the descendants of the former being blond and dolichocephalic and those of the latter dark. The only real descendants of the ancient Germans are scattered in Holland, the Palatinate, Alsace, German Switzerland, etc.

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peculiar mentality which has certainly not made the modern Germans a homogeneous people, but has given all their aspirations the same orientation. The Germans conquered by Prussia speedily identified themselves with their new masters, and their assimilation was all the easier because they have always shown a respectful admiration for their conquerors, even for Napoleon. When the Emperor entered Berlin, Prince Isenburg and the other great Prussian lords humbly implored commissions in his army, and so disgusted him by their sordid conduct that he wrote Davoust: "These people are as despicable in adversity as they are arrogant and supercilious at the least glimmer of prosperity."

It is their own past history which has instilled a religious respect for superior force in the various inhabitants of Germany, because they lived for centuries under many different masters, who were systematically harsh to them. And a glance at their past also enables one to understand why their personality has been so vague throughout the ages. German writers have had need of all their patriotic zeal in order to furnish their fellow-countrymen with an *ex post facto* history which should be even a little homogeneous, and have succeeded in doing so only by manufacturing it, as one might make a complete new family tree for some ambitious parvenu.

One of the most ingenious feats which these writers have attempted has been their endeavour to prove, in the face of all likelihood, that the invasions of the Germanic hordes which ravaged

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Europe, and thereby destroyed Roman civilization, really regenerated the world. It is a matter of fact that long centuries were required before these tribes, which had not a trace of cultivation, and which were difficult to instruct, were able to build up a rude and sketchy semblance of civilization out of the wreckage of that which their ferocity had destroyed. As M. Duruy writes in his *Histoire romaine*: "This predatory race was the scourge of the world for four centuries. . . ." And, says Gregory of Tours, "they have no respect for their sworn word, are merciless to the conquered, and faithless to women, children, and the weak."

The Teutonic historians next strove to attribute various artistic and literary innovations to mediæval Germany, which really never dreamed of inventing anything at all. The researches of modern scholarship clearly prove that Gothic architecture, which is the most beautiful exteriorization of the Middle Ages, is of French origin, as is also all mediæval lyric art, with its legends of Parsifal, Tristan and Iseult, and the rest. Nor are either feudalism or chivalry due to Germany, who has always imitated, but never created any new thing. Even to-day her soil is covered with all manner of buildings which are copies of the period when every petty little German princeling had his eyes fixed on the Court of Louis XIV.

One must keep well in mind the docility of the German temperament underlying the vague forms of philosophical independence assumed by it, as well as its imitative spirit, if one would understand

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how Prussia succeeded in modifying the national mentality so quickly by the utilization of these inherited qualities.

2. *General Characteristics of the German Mentality.*

It is only by confining oneself to generalities that one can discuss national mentality, for though all nations doubtless possess a certain number of common characteristics, many partial differences divide them, and even various provinces possess strongly marked dissimilarities. A Fleming, a Breton, a man of Bourgogne or of Marseilles, have quite different mentalities, and even the occupations leave their special imprint and give the workman, the priest, the magistrate, and the officer each his own peculiar mentality. These distinctions, however, do not in the least preclude the existence of common characteristics, any more than they do in zoology. For instance, the various breeds of dogs are very unlike, and yet they may all be classified as belonging to the same species, because their similarities outweigh their differences.

Among the general characteristics which are found in almost all Germans of the present day are not only a sentiment of solidarity and a deferential submissiveness to every sort of official authority, but a haughty feeling of collective superiority, which may be attributed in part to the fact that they are incapable of imagining any point of view except their own, and therefore know nothing whatever about the psychology of other

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nations. We are all aware what proofs of this lack of understanding were given by German diplomats before the war.

In addition to the collective vanity which characterizes the whole nation, the educated classes have an overplus of ready-made opinions and formulas borrowed from books and the teachings of the universities ; but their specialized studies soon limit the number of these general ideas, which are finally reduced to those entertained by the Government and circulated in the daily Press.

The servile docility of the Germans made Frederick the Great exclaim that he was tired of governing slaves ; but their rulers have no reason to complain of it, for it gives the nation absolute confidence in the statements of the authorities. For instance, the German people were told that Belgium was destroyed as a punishment for having violated her own neutrality, and they believed it quite as readily as they did the other statement that war had been declared against France because her military aeroplanes had bombarded a German railway. There was not a German who had the slightest impulse to question the truth of these assertions.

The Teuton has no less confidence in his professors than in his rulers. He has been told many times that the German race is characterized by blue eyes and a dolichocephalic skull, and having once heard it he repeats it continually, for although dolichocephalic types are rare in Germany, and Prussia had formerly more Slavs than Germans among her subjects, the theoretical type of the Germanic race,

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artificially constructed by the professors, carries the day over the real type.

Among the characteristics which are most prevalent in the German mentality may be mentioned brutality, lack of good-breeding, and an entire absence of the chivalrous spirit, all of which traits exist among the educated classes no less than among the common people. These fundamental qualities of the Teutonic mind are more clearly revealed by the note-books which have been taken from prisoners of all classes since the war began than by any books which have been written on the subject. A Colonel who has translated several of these documents, says :—

“I hope that the enormous mass of German correspondence which has come into our possession will one day be published. We have letters from men of the middle - classes, from workmen, merchants, professors, and artists, and in them are revealed the secret thoughts of all classes, callings, and grades of social environment.

“Conflagrations kindled in cold blood are described in them, artistic instincts are represented as satisfied by the sight of accumulated and wanton ruin, and the idiotic cruelties of enraged beer-drinkers are laid bare. They show us the gluttony of pillagers delighted to surfeit themselves free of cost, and the filthy sadism of violators of children. We witness the pedantic cruelty of men who massacre in cold blood and seek in the *philosophy of war* a justification for useless slaughter ; and our very eyes behold the torturers of women and old men, wretches who find the reward of battle

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in the sack of a conquered village. This is how they look in uniform; this is how we officers and soldiers see the whole German nation."

Under the title *Pensées d'un lieutenant allemand*, the *Temps* has published a pamphlet whose author preaches slaughter, pillage, incendiarism, and also the violation of women, that the chosen race may increase and multiply, and who hopes that the struggle may go on "over mountains of the dead and across oceans of tears." He says:—

"Ought civilization to erect its temples upon mountains of the dead, across oceans of tears and on the agony of the dying? Yes, it ought. If a nation has the right to dominate, its power to conquer is the supreme moral law, before which the conquered must bow. Woe to the vanquished!"

The author of this pamphlet was captured at Ypres, and we now know his antecedents. He was a professor of history in the school at Greisswald, and a protégé of Field-Marshal von Haeseler, whose theories, he says, are the same as his own. In any case, they give a very fair idea as to the mentality of German military men and many professors.

The brutality of the German educated classes has impressed all the neutrals who have visited their country during the war, as witness what M. Ibanez de Ibero, a Spaniard, has written in one of the reviews:—

"It was among the German intellectuals that I found the most violent and fixed ideas about the war. The politicians and the financiers appeared to me far more moderate in their views; but the

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university professors are often regrettably stubborn and entirely misapprehend what is going on. In some cases their minds, indeed, seem seriously affected. . . . The mentality of the German professor is not in the least complex. He may sometimes be spiteful and crafty, but he lacks psychology."

From the above we see that the refinement of manners and customs so highly valued among the Latin nations is thoroughly despised by the Germans, who look upon mildness and benevolence as synonymous with impotence and debility. They justify their brutality by saying that Germany owes the other nations no debt of good-will or even of pity, since she has been chosen by divine decree to impose her will upon all of them. This explains the Emperor William's saying, which I have already quoted: "Humaneness ends this side of the Vosges, as far as I am concerned."

Teutonic brutality is accompanied by a lack of tact and good-breeding, which impresses strangers no less than the obsequiousness shown to the strong. The disgusting manner in which the Emperor of Germany caused the French Ambassador to be treated when he left Berlin is well known. M. Cambon told me himself that he was shut into a train guarded by the police, and left without food of any kind for twenty-six hours, and was obliged to pay five thousand francs in gold before being allowed to proceed on his journey. The Dowager Empress of Russia, who was then in Germany, was also subjected to the most infamous usage. And yet at the same time the German Ambassador to

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Paris was being conducted to the border in a special *train de luxe*.

This lack of good-breeding is recognized by the Germans themselves, when they have been a little refined by the influences of foreign travel. Professor W. Voight, of the University of Göttingen, admits in a lecture, published by the *Journal de Genève* on October 31, 1914, that:—

“Cultivated French and English people are generally superior to Germans in breeding, because they are products of an older civilization.”

The German is extremely susceptible to suggestion, and this is one reason why newspapers and books have such an influence upon him. The credulity shown by him during the war is notorious, and no tale has been too improbable for his unhesitating acceptance. This suggestibility of the German mind had, however, been observed long ago, for in the days of Goethe and Schiller, *Die Leiden des jungen Werther* caused a large number of suicides, and the publication of *Die Räuber* induced many German students to go and live in the forests; while to mention a modern instance, William the Second is constantly haunted by visions of mediæval knights clad in shining armour.

The same trait makes the German desire to resemble his neighbour, and to think collectively, while the Englishman, on the contrary, prefers to think for himself, and would rather be unlike his neighbour than like him.

Insincerity is one of the commonest German defects, and is probably an old one, if we may judge

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from what Velleius Paterculus wrote at the beginning of the Christian Era :—

“ The German character is an appalling mixture of cruelty and knavery. They are a people born for lying.”

In the preceding pages I have studied only a few phases of the German mentality, and have not mentioned the characteristics to which the nation owes its success, since these are dealt with in other chapters.

3. Influence of the Prussian Military System upon the Formation of the Modern German Mentality.

When Leibnitz wrote that a nation's mentality may be transformed by education in less than a century, he expressed a half-truth which he might have completed by adding the influence of the military system to that of education.

As a matter of fact, and as the Germans themselves admit, the military system has essentially modified the Teutonic mentality ; for life-long habits of precision, order, and submissiveness are necessarily acquired by a nation when all its able-bodied men are compelled, first for two years and afterwards at stated intervals, to live in barracks where they are soundly flogged for the slightest irregularity. The whole of German barrack-life education is founded upon fear, the power of which as a psychological factor is clearly pointed out in the following words of Frederick the Great :—

“ Each one of these men whom you see, if taken

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separately, cannot do other than hate me ; but once they are in the ranks, and realize that the *feldwebel* stands behind them, stick in hand, they tremble before me, and would defend me from assassins.

“ And what is still more extraordinary, if I only give the word of command, they will eagerly expose themselves to fire, and unhesitatingly give their lives for me, because they believe me and my corporals when we tell them they must die for me, although they do not know even what the war is about. How have I obtained this result? In the first place by the aid of the stick.”

The use of the stick and the whip has always been a tradition in the German Army. A century ago, while attending the Congress of Rastadt, the Chevalier de Lang wrote :—

“ Each morning I was awakened by the sound of the beatings which the officers of the Baden regiment administered to their men every day.”

In spite of the complaints which have been repeated hundreds of times in the German newspapers, the severity of the system has not been relaxed. After German unification it was extended to all the soldiers who came under Prussian control, and is now applied to them with force and frequency. It is by dint of floggings that the young Germans who undergo the barrack system realize the necessity of principles of order, discipline, regularity, and respect for their superiors. They are unmercifully thrashed for the smallest infraction of the rules, and in this way they very soon acquire a profound deference for their masters.

In time of war the German is treated with the

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same brutality. In the *Weekly Times* of April 23, 1915, an eye-witness related that soldiers were tied to trees for hours together and severely flogged for the slightest offence¹ :—

“It cannot be denied that these methods appear to suit the German temperament. . . .

“In answer to the question of why the brutality on the part of their officers is not more actively resented by the men, . . . it must be pointed out that bullying and the exercise of brute force are only an inevitable part of the whole system by which they live and move and have their being, which has crushed individuality, and moulded mind and body for its own purpose. Indeed, the strength of the German war-machine lies in the fact that this system has met with acquiescence and has been accepted for years.”

Animal training long ago showed what excellent results could be obtained by the methodical use of the whip, and to this the modern German likewise owes a large share of his accomplishments. All his life he looks over his shoulder and catches glimpses of the shadow of a whip which not only keeps him in the straight and narrow path of duty, but which necessarily contributes to the development of those German ideas about right and might that have so astonished the civilized nations. A man who is flogged at the pleasure of his officers

¹ The *Temps* of June 11, 1915, reports in detail a five hours debate of the Budget Committee in the Reichstag with regard to brutalities committed by officers upon soldiers at the front. Representatives of all parties declared that they had received hundreds of complaints on this subject.

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soon learns that might alone can arrogate this sort of right to itself, and from then on he can see no difference between the two.

But while we must acknowledge the accomplishments which a nation may acquire by this sort of training, still it is certain that such a system, which is excellent for men who are already broken to it by centuries of servitude, would not be tolerated by any other race, except perhaps by negroes and certain Asiatic tribes.

The German officer is treated with enormous respect because of his power in barracks, and, fancying that he is made of finer clay than other people, he recognizes no law but that of the military code. A very typical example of his mentality was furnished by the notorious affair at Zabern, where a Colonel had some thirty civilians, including a magistrate, thrown into a cellar and kept there for twenty-four hours, simply because he did not consider that they had paid him proper respect. He was brought before a military court and was not only unanimously acquitted, but received the congratulations of the Crown Prince as well. Had a similar violation of the law occurred in England, he would have been given a prison sentence or condemned to the gallows.

The German officer is extremely ignorant of everything but his profession, and has no diversions except gambling and drinking. His mentality is strongly reminiscent of that possessed by the drunken, insolent, pillaging *reiters* of the Middle Ages.

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4. *Influence of Education upon the Modern German Mentality.*

Next to the influence of the barracks, and recalling it in many ways, though of far less importance, comes that of the school, which from the primary classes to the highest forms of instruction is admirably adapted to the industrial needs of the modern era. Technical education is exceedingly well developed, and there are schools for every branch of industry, cooking included. Whether the subject taught be technical or one of the superior branches of learning, the established rule is an extreme subdivision of labour. The same principle of examining small facts with minute care, to the exclusion of general ideas, is applied to researches of pure scholarship as well as to those of the laboratory.

M. Croiset says of German scholarship :—

“ They apply themselves laboriously to collating manuscripts and cataloguing sources, to bibliography and to minutiae of detail which would disgust more brilliant and less tenacious minds.”

These remarks should not be looked upon as criticisms, however, for a method which permits a nation to utilize the least brilliant brains in its midst is invaluable to it.

The same principle of division of labour is applied in the scientific and industrial laboratories, and leads to important practical results in the technical field. The most skilful chemists and their pupils confine themselves to a narrow sphere, as was seen in the case of Ehrlich's celebrated remedy :—

“ Before fixing upon the definitive formula he

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caused a great many analogous arsenicated compounds to be prepared by a large number of chemists. No one single man could have sufficed for the task, which was an irksome one, and all the more trying because each of the compounds obtained had to be subjected to chemical analysis."

Such a system, which is founded upon a minutely detailed organization, is necessary in modern industry ; but Ostwald is greatly mistaken in thinking that the Germans alone are capable of it. The competition to which Germany has been subjected from both England and America proves that other methods give quite as good results. I am prepared to agree with him that the organizing faculty is a factor of progress, for this is a mere truism. The Romans owed their supremacy to it, and nations which, like the Turks, have never acquired more than the rudiments of organization, have produced no lasting results, have left ruin in their wake, and would not have been able to construct even the few roads and railways which they actually possess, had it not been for the aid of Europeans.

Germany's mistake, however, lies in believing that organization can be effected only by the State. A rigid form of State Socialism has succeeded in her case, because she is militarized to such an extent that her citizens readily comply with the most meticulous regulations. But to say that this system is the best is false, for as I repeat, quite as good results have been obtained in England and America, where Government interference is reduced to a minimum and private initiative is carried to its maximum limits.

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State Socialism and private initiative are conceptions so irreconcilable that one cannot change from one to the other, and which of them shall be selected depends upon the racial traits and mental condition of the different nations, whose temperament alone causes them to choose between liberty and servitude to the State.

5. Influence of Religion upon the Formation of the German Mentality.

The influence of religion upon the modern German mentality is so weak in comparison to that exerted by the Prussian system of military organization, that I need scarcely have mentioned it at all. I shall consider it, however, for the sake of giving a new support by the way to a theory which I have developed in several previous works, and which is that the idea of the unity of religious beliefs is a fallacious one, since no nation adopts a religion without transforming it in accordance with its own mentality.

It is very interesting to ascertain what different influences may be exerted by the same religion, or, to be even more specific, by the same religious book, according to the mental constitution of the race involved. For instance, the influence of the Protestant faith has been very important in England, while in Germany it has been rather weak. It was propagated in England by the reading of the Bible, which is an indispensable book, because the very foundations of the Reformation rest upon exclusive obedience to its teachings. And the reading of

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the Bible had an important influence upon the English people because its free interpretation was perfectly suited to the independence of the English spirit, and was bound to bring about the rise of an English religion, in which true English sentiment should find expression. The biblical Jehova soon became an English God when He was carried to England, just as He would have become a Chinese god, like Buddha of old, if He had been taken to China. On the other hand, when Germany adopted the Christian God, so mild and merciful to the lowly of the earth, He took the form of a savage deity, who despised the weak and accorded his protection to the strong alone. A transformation of this sort cannot surprise the philosopher, for he knows that gods do not change the souls of nations, but that, on the contrary, they are made in the image of the peoples who adopt them.

This general law, which I have developed elsewhere, is very clearly seen in the evolution of Christianity in modern Germany. From the psychological point of view, Germany did a really remarkable thing when she harmonized the evangelical ideal of charity, mildness, and protection of the oppressed—stigmatized as slave-morality by Nietzsche—with an ideal of force, brutality, and conquest so utterly foreign to Christian teachings. Mystic logic knows no contradictions, however, and Germany's religious and political ideals have accordingly blended with one another, although they are absolutely antagonistic.

Owing to the identification of these two ideals the German State has the support of the theologians,

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while the French Government is opposed by them. It is a great source of weakness for a nation to be at the mercy of conflicting authorities which are always ready to begin hostilities in its midst.

The German Protestant theologians are not in any case a tender-hearted body of men. They cannot harm the German Catholics, who are numerous enough to defend themselves, but in the present war the faithful into whom their doctrines have been instilled have displayed a savage hatred of a religion which they detest by shooting down a vast number of Catholic priests under the most flimsy pretexts, and by destroying all the Catholic churches they could.

6. The Unification of the Modern German Mind. Its Lack of Personality and its Collective Elements.

The influences which we have been describing in the preceding paragraphs, and which have held their own, unyielding and austere, under Prussia's heavy hand, have produced similar changes in all the manifestations of the Teutonic mentality, have destroyed the individual mind of the German by degrees, and have transformed it into a collective mind.

The mental unification of a nation has never been carried to such an extent. As I have said before, it has impressed every one who has had occasion during the war to inspect German prisoners of every social class ; and all those who have had personal experience agree with the following remarks, which

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I quote from a correspondent of the *Gazette de Lausanne* :—

“I could never have believed that the psychological unification of the masses could have been so completely attained. There is something about it which makes one ask whether it is admirable or deplorable. One would say that a single brain thinks inside all those thousands of heads. I do not know whether it is a phenomenon of mental contagion, or the result of a strict education directed exclusively to purposes of war. But while their sensibilities are different, their intellects are diverse, and their methods of expression various, their personality appears to have vanished. There are no longer any individuals in Germany. There is nothing but a nation, a social organism, whose brain is the all-powerful State.”

Courage, initiative, and volition are all collective in the German of the present day. He is incapable of action unless he is merged in a group, which may be a trade-union, a corporation, or a community. Even when isolated he remains collective, and in the loftiest realms of science his work is exclusively collective, as is shown from the fact that the names of a dozen authors are often signed to works of the most highly specialized character, like treatises on ophthalmology, for instance.

We must keep this collective character of the German mind well in view if we would understand such a document as, for instance, the notorious manifesto signed by ninety-three eminent Teutonic scholars. These pages, which are filled with psychological lessons, and which will be famous for all

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time to come, clearly demonstrate the low intellectual value of the collective mind. They also verify the fact which I pointed out long ago in my books, that the most sagacious intellect loses all its powers of judgment when subjected to collective influences. Indubitable facts and incontrovertible proofs have no appeal for the powers of collective observation.

The object of the manifesto was to defend the Germans against the accusations of slaughter, pillage, and the burning of cities and monuments brought against them. The following are some extracts from it :—

"It is untrue that we committed the crime of violating the neutrality of Belgium. It has been proved that France and England had decided to violate it. It has been proved that Belgium had concluded an agreement with those countries, and it would have been suicidal had we not outstripped them.

"It is untrue that our soldiers attacked the life or destroyed the property of any one single Belgian citizen, except when constrained to do so by the bitterest necessity.

"It is untrue that our troops wreaked their brutal fury on Louvain. They were obliged to bombard a part of the city as a reprisal against a population which had run riot and attacked them in their quarters."

There is no need to discuss the truth of these denials now, for the subject has long since been cleared up by official documents. The authors of the manifesto have probably reached settled con-

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clusions by this time, and no doubt most of them are very sorry that they ever signed it. But I dare say that few of them would venture to write such words as the following, which are from the pen of Maximilian Harden, the celebrated German publicist :—

“ Let us cease our wretched efforts to apologize for what Germany has done, and let us stop heaping contempt and insult upon the enemy. We have not plunged into this colossal adventure against our will, nor was it forced upon us by surprise. We wanted it, we had to want it, and we do not appear before the bar of Europe because we do not recognize its jurisdiction in the case. Our might will make a new law in Europe. It is Germany who strikes. . . . Germany is carrying on this war because she wants more room in the world and larger markets for the products of her activity.”

7. Why the German Mentality has Readily adapted itself to the Industrial Evolution of the Modern World.

Nations have never made continuous progress in all the course of history, for after certain periods of development and greatness they decline and disappear, and so complete has been the destruction of some of them that even the sites of their capitals have been unknown until discovered by modern archæology. It is only yesterday that the remains of Troy and Nineveh and Babylon were unearthed.

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These phases of greatness and decline are due to various causes. Chief among them I may mention the law of adaptation which presides over the evolution of human society no less than over that of the animal world, and forces all living creatures to modify themselves when changes occur in their environment. He who can adapt himself advances, while he who cannot do so disappears.

Just as every variation in climate entails a profound transformation of fauna and flora, so every economic, political, religious, or social change necessitates a special adaptation of the mentality of the nations subjected to its influence. But the qualities which make adaptation possible are not the same for all the different variations of environment, and indeed the very ones which are most advantageous at one period cease to be so at another.

Now, the new conditions of existence which have been created by the scientific evolution of industry require precisely those faculties which used to be considered rather inferior and which the Germans possess to a high degree. Modern life demands strictly practical attainments, which necessitate an exceedingly minute division of labour ; and to adapt itself to these conditions a race must have qualities of patience, regularity, and vigilant attention, which are difficult matters for those that are too alert or imaginative, but which are easy for the Germans, owing to a natural bias, as well as to their inexorable military system.

These qualities, which the modern mechanical era has made indispensable, remained almost unused until the beginning of the last century. Industry

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was in its infancy, and science was being slowly created. A Galileo, a Descartes, and a Newton were needed to lay the foundations; but these intellectual giants are now no longer required, and to-day their places are taken by millions of ant-like beings, who divide the physical world into an infinite number of small fragments. The German laboratories are like vast ant-hills in which thousands of specialists devote themselves to the exclusive study of practical problems leading to marketable results, and as Prince von Bülow has very justly remarked of his compatriots, they have become a nation of merchants since 1870.

All these specialists, who are of priceless value to industry, have little knowledge of general principles. The learned men who are gifted with the philosophic spirit, like Darwin, Pasteur, Claude Bernard, Taine, and the rest, never emerge from their ranks, nor have such great modern inventions as the telephone, the aeroplane, the motor-car, wireless telegraphy, and antisepsis come forth from German laboratories. In spite of this inferiority, however, Teutonic vanity has outrun all bounds, and has led some of their scholars to the strangest interpretations of history. Chamberlain declares that Dante, Rembrandt, Pascal, Racine and others were Germans, while celebrated professors write books on chemistry and heavy bacteriological treatises without mentioning Lavoisier or Pasteur.

Although the German laboratories very seldom generate new ideas, they are nevertheless admirably equipped for systematizing and utilizing the ideas which have already been evolved by the master

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minds of the world, and in this lies their greatest strength, not only with regard to the scientific realm, but in the domain of philosophy as well. All the great German philosophers and thinkers lived prior to the period of German unity, and under the rather patriarchal system of small States which had not yet been militarized by Prussia. Not one man can be named as having exerted any marked influence since that time ; for Nietzsche, who is the author most widely read, simply popularized the vindication of force, a principle which had already been laid down by the German historians.

However this may be, the Germans are, as I must repeat, admirably adapted to the technical evolution of the modern era. Yesterday they amounted to nothing ; but to-day their ambition aspires to the world.

It is natural that Germany should give first rank to the abilities by which she has won her military, industrial, and commercial supremacy, for every nation necessarily classifies social values hierarchically, taking its own as a standard, and since talents for manufacturing, trading, and destroying are the greatest characteristics of the Germans, they declare these to be good qualities of the highest order.

Among the many forms of superiority which the Germans ascribe to themselves there are three which it would be difficult for other nations to accept as standards of value. The first is their military slavery ; the second the animal instinct, which leads them to reproduce their kind without ceasing ; and the third, the gregarious spirit, which makes them

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accept with servile submissiveness all the opinions which the State imposes upon them'.

It is doubtful whether the future will classify the nations according to Teutonic estimates. Shall it be the ideal of mankind to manufacture the largest possible number of tons of sauerkraut, sausages, ironmongery, beer, and trumpery wares of various kinds, to fill the world with these things and to protect them with cannons which will permit of no competition?

We cannot know the destiny which is reserved for the nations of the future, but if Prussian militarism should prevail the flower of mankind would be doomed to disappear, liberty would join the other unworshipped deities in oblivion, and humanity, which has laboured for centuries to free itself from the bondage and thralldom successively imposed upon it by men, nature, and the gods, would be subjected to them again and for a long time to come.

BOOK III

THE REMOTE CAUSES OF THE WAR

CHAPTER I

THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CAUSES OF THE WAR

1. *The Real and Imaginary Causes of the War*

GREAT events like wars spring from remote as well as immediate causes, but it is the former which we shall investigate in this and the following chapters.

Among the remote causes of the present war some are real and others imaginary, but even those which are the most imaginary are not by any means the least effective when one regards them as incentives to action. As I have often said, it is not the philosopher's business to scrutinize the rational value of the motives which actuate mankind, but rather the influence which they exert; for, if the battles which have been fought over illusions that were totally devoid of rational value were to be erased from history, there would not be many left.

A half-century of preparatory causes and a week of immediate ones led up to the European War, and the two questions which we have to ask in connection with it are, first, what were the causes which prepared the way for it all those fifty years; and, in the second place, who wanted war during the week when the diplomatic conversations were proceeding?

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Neither of these problems is easy to solve, because the two sets of belligerents give entirely contradictory answers, all the Germans being convinced that the French and English had long desired the contest, while the French are equally persuaded that Germany took advantage of the first pretext to declare a war which she herself longed for. We shall put aside this question for the time being, and shall now proceed to study the remote factors which led the way to this terrible conflagration.

2. The Supposed Over-Population of Germany.

Although it is quite incorrect, the theory that the over-population of Germany was one cause of the war is widely held both in that country and in France. It is derived from the application of biological laws to human society, a procedure which is often resorted to by Teutonic writers. Bernhardt in particular frequently makes the theories of Malthus and Darwin a basis for his own; but many of his conclusions are not in the least susceptible of such proof as he imagines, for while it is true that the animal world is under the strict rule of the forces of nature, and cannot oppose them, the efforts of man, on the contrary, have enabled him to do battle with these forces.

The theory of Malthus, as every one knows, is that the natural tendency of all living beings, including the human race, is to reproduce their kind to excess, but that because of the intimate relationship which exists between the number of the population and its means of subsistence, this excess is

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checked and the proper equilibrium re-established by wars and epidemics, as soon as it reaches a certain figure.

There is no doubt that a given area gradually becomes capable of supporting a larger number of inhabitants, owing to the progress of industry and agriculture; but nevertheless there comes a time when this equilibrium is overthrown, and as a portion of the population then finds difficulty in providing for itself, it must either emigrate or make war on less densely populated countries. During the course of history this phenomenon has been exemplified by various races, among whom we may mention the Germans of former times and the Japanese of to-day.

Modern Germany was not in any such condition, as we can easily prove; although some of her writers base their assertions with regard to the necessity of war upon her supposed over-population. This is Bernhardt's view, as we see by the following passage which I quote from the first volume of his *Vom heutigen Kriege*:—

“Given the present situation of the world, war must be considered almost as a necessity for the future development of our nation.

“Germany is now supporting a population of sixty-seven millions upon a territory which is about the same as that of France, while the latter has a population of only forty millions. The annual growth of this enormous population is about a million, and the agriculture and industry of the mother-country cannot in the long run furnish such an increasing body of men with sufficient remunera-

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tive labour to supply their needs. Therefore, unless we wish the power and prosperity of our neighbours and rivals to be augmented by German emigration, as was the case in days gone by, we must add to our colonial possessions, and thereby secure labour and the means of subsistence for our surplus population.

"Owing to the political divisions of the present time we can acquire such territories only at the expense of other States or by allying ourselves with them, but neither of these solutions is possible unless we first put our power in Central Europe upon a better basis; for our foreign policy can now take no step in advance without confronting a European War, which would have to be waged against adversaries who are stronger than ourselves. The burden of this situation is almost unbearable to us."

Bernhardi's opinion appears to be shared by many German writers:—

"Our country is too small in proportion to the rapid growth of the population. We need other territories, and we can take them only from the nations whose population is decreasing, and who will soon be no longer in a position to utilize a great part of their own soil. The French lay themselves open to attack from us."

If this idea were correct German emigration would be increasing all the while; but as a matter of fact it has diminished to such an extent that it is now much smaller than that of the English, and not only is there no over-population in Germany, but since its transformation into a manufacturing country it has an actual dearth of unskilled labour,

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and at certain seasons of the year is obliged to import several thousands of Italians, Croatians, and other foreigners to help in the work of the harvests and the mines.

The population of the German Empire is increasing by eight hundred thousand souls per year, and now amounts to almost seventy millions, but this does not mean that it is excessive. Germany is not even one of the most densely populated countries in the world, as may be seen from the following table which gives the population of several States:—

	Number of inhabitants per square kilometre.
France	74
Germany	120
Italy.....	121
Japan	139
England	144
Holland	182
Belgium	254

Let us now put ourselves in the place of these German writers for a moment and, although statistics tell a different story, let us admit that over-populated Germany needs other countries as an outlet for her surplus population. Even so, it would not be advantageous for her to go to war unless these countries had excluded her from their territory. As a matter of fact, the contrary is precisely the case, for the Germans have been so free to infiltrate into every part of the globe that they have overspread a vast number of countries, and the cheap prices of their wares have made them the masters of all the great markets of the world. Even should they win this war, it may well be

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doubted whether they will be received more cordially than they were before by the countries which they have devastated. Thus the motives for making war on the ground of a supposed German over-population are entirely illusory.

The theory that an increase in the population constitutes a country's strength I consider equally false, although it is very prevalent in France, and I have often argued against it, in spite of good Dr. Bertillon's indignation. If the strength of a country consisted in a large population we should have to place China and Russia in the foremost rank, while, as a matter of fact, the Russians were always defeated in the Japanese War, and have had many reverses in the present one.

In spite of appearances, the factors which weigh the heaviest in the scales of success are not numbers, but railways, munitions, and gold. An army of five hundred thousand men, which, we will say, has an unlimited quantity of munitions and can transport itself at will from one point to another by means of its railway system, will defeat a much larger army which has few railways and an inadequate supply of munitions, deficiencies from which the Russians are suffering as I write these words.

There is little profit in expatiating upon a subject of this sort, however, for all the leagues and speeches in France have probably never increased the statistics of the population by a single unit, and since we are powerless to add to its numbers, we should bend all our efforts to the improvement of its quality. Personally I should far rather have belonged to a small nation like Greece, whose

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intellect still illumines the world, than to the Asiatic armies of Xerxes. It should be the ideal of mankind to form part of a chosen few rather than of a herd, and although the chosen few cannot of course prevent herds from increasing and multiplying until they become a danger to the rest of the world, still when this occurs, as the present war shows, the nations which are numerically weak unite to resist the aggressions of the invader.

The obsequious worshippers of mere numbers, among whom I regret to see M. Colson, the most authoritative of our economists, would make one fancy that mankind's only aim should be the manufacture of merchandise in one set of huge factories and of cannons in another for the protection of those who deal in the aforesaid merchandise; but the human race would soon give up living if it could look forward to nothing except slavery in the factory and obedience to the owners of big guns.

3. The Desire of Expansion and Commercial Outlets.

A desire for expansion and domination is a psychological factor which is normal to nations whose military strength is on the increase; for the mere growth of their power makes them wish to assume the tone of masters in countries which originally received them as simple merchants; but as it is uncomfortable for them to acknowledge that this desire is inspired by their pride alone, they naturally look for a material substratum of justification. That which is put forward by Teutonic

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writers is the necessity of creating commercial markets for the Fatherland; but this 'is quite as false a motive as the supposed over-population of the country, for as I have shown before, the Germans already had these markets in all the countries which they were overspreading from day to day. In spite of this fact the French as well as the Germans themselves are firmly convinced that one of the causes of the war was this desire on the part of Germany to open up commercial markets for her products. We see this in the following quotation from M. Hanotaux, one of the most eminent of French historians :—

“ Every one knows that the essential reason of the present war is the determination of the German Empire to secure food and welfare for all its subjects by winning world-wide markets for German labour and its products. This is the policy which I began by calling the policy of the stomach, and which has made the German race fling itself upon the world like a pack of starved wolves.”

A similar opinion is expressed by Professor Lévy Bruhl of the Sorbonne, in a work on the economic causes of the war :—

“ If Germany possessed great and wealthy colonies, they would no doubt furnish her with safe and permanent markets, and she would have steady and regular commercial intercourse with them, like England, France, and Holland. . . . She suffers from their lack as if she had been used unjustly, and her dull resentment has probably contributed indirectly to urge her along the path of military and naval preparation. . . . She has asked

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herself what was the use of her military supremacy if it could not secure her the markets which were indispensable to her commerce."

The idea contained in the preceding quotations, viz., that the desire to create commercial markets is an incentive to war, is one of the most disastrous errors of modern times, and it is really strange that any one can still be found to express it; for, as a matter of fact, the most cursory glance at the statistics of commercial exchange is enough to refute it. The best customers of France and England are certainly not their own colonies, but the great countries which it has never entered their minds to conquer. And how can any one plead Germany's supposed need of distant markets for her merchandise in the face of the overwhelming evidence of the fact that even if she conquered all the colonies of the other nations her commercial profits would never amount to as much as those she was making from her trade with France, England, and Russia? Before the war Germany's wares were invading all countries without finding any opposition. Why, then, use the force of arms to create markets which she already possessed without risking the life of a single man?

In a chapter of my *Psychologie politique* entitled "The New Forms of Colonization,"¹ I showed how the Germans had hitherto left to others the trouble and expense which the administration of a country entails, and had reserved their efforts to exploitation, as for instance on the Côte d'Azur, which had become a German colony for about

¹ Eleventh edition, p. 277 ff.

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125 miles of its length. Now let us suppose, according to our previous hypothesis, that France and England were conquered by the Germans. Would the latter have more commerce with these countries? They would certainly have far less, because conquest would have impoverished the vanquished.

A desire to create markets cannot therefore be one of the real causes of the war, for as I must repeat, these markets had been won long ago. I should not have mentioned such a visionary cause in this chapter if it were not part of a stock of errors which hold their own in the world because people accept them with closed eyes and do not make any thorough investigation of them.

4. *Colonial Competition.*

A much more serious incentive to war than the one which has just been mentioned was Germany's desire to acquire colonies, not as commercial markets, but—and this is a very different matter—as naval bases where the fleet which she had built could renew supplies.

The Morocco crisis, which all but brought about a war, taught the world the new ambitions of the German Government, while it also showed the Germans that the European Powers were not at all anxious to let foreigners invade their colonies by armed expeditions. Now the most important military positions of the world were already appropriated, and if Germany wanted them she would have to take them by force; but this seemed an

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easy task, since she had augmented her merchant shipping by building a large and powerful navy.

The Germans were greatly exasperated by the resistance of France, who was backed by England, at the time of the Agadir Incident, for they perceived that she, whom they had considered so weak, was righting herself, and it seemed as though the wall which stood in the way of the new Teutonic aspirations was not to be scaled peaceably. In coming upon the scene of colonial rivalry so late Germany was a victim to one of Bismarck's rare errors of foresight; for it is a fact that this statesman urged France to embark upon a colonial policy in order to deter her from a war of revenge and to bring her into conflict with England, while he took the opposite course in Germany because he had not grasped the advantage of colonial possessions.

Bismarck had made a mistake, for England and France did not become rivals, while, on the contrary, French interests began to clash with those of Germany; but the famous Chancellor, who argued according to the ideas of his day, had no reason to suspect that by urging France to develop her colonial policy he was acting in direct opposition to the interests of the German Empire, which at the time had a fleet of no importance.

However, I do not believe that Germany would have gone to war on account of Morocco, for her ambitions were loftier and directed to objects less remote. What they were I have stated in another work, in which I pointed out that she would make war sooner or later in order to seize Antwerp, which she needed for her navy.

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Although it cannot be said that the possession of Antwerp was an initial cause of the present war, it was certainly one of Germany's chief objective points. Any one who doubts this need only read the following letter addressed to a German-American review on April 17, 1915, by an ex-Minister for the Colonies, Herr Dernburg, who was sent by the German Government to the United States for the purpose of converting American public opinion to the Teutonic cause.

"Belgium commands the principal western outlet of Germany's commerce, and towards it the Empire must naturally expand, because it is the only maritime outlet which can be secured to German commerce. Its political status has been established, maintained, and defended by England with the object of depriving Germany of her natural advantages. Therefore we cannot relinquish Belgium."

Probably the Germans would rather give up Alsace than Antwerp, and for this reason I have always said, since the fall of the Belgian city, that the war would be a very long one.

5. *Political Mistakes.*

An enumeration of the remote political events which have contributed more or less to the genesis of the present conflict would need a large volume to itself, for it would require to go back at least as far as the seizure of the Danish Duchies by Prussia, a conquest which France made no effort to prevent, and then to show that in allowing Prussia

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to crush Austria at Sadowa, the statesmen of the period made a very serious mistake, for which the political blindness that seemed to afflict them all is only a slight excuse.

I cannot even touch upon this history here, but shall confine myself to mentioning some of the errors which were committed by the English and Russian diplomats in 1870, and which may be considered as among the remote causes of the present conflict. Of these mistakes one of the most serious was due to a lack of understanding on the part of the British Cabinet, which refused to sanction a Congress that would undoubtedly have prevented the annexations made by Prussia. I have already pointed out the consequences of this in a book which was published long before the present war, and I shall simply repeat them here :—

“If England is now struggling against the immense difficulties which have arisen from the necessity of adding considerably to the amount of her taxation in order to increase her fleet and to cope with the menacing supremacy of Germany, it is because her rulers could not foresee any of these things forty years ago. For the satisfaction of a grudge, which is a thing no real statesman should be capable of, after the Franco-Prussian War, she refused to countenance a Congress which would have restricted Germany's claims and would have made the future a different one. The fear that such a Congress might assemble was a nightmare to Bismarck, who thought of it night and day, as he says in his memoirs.”

English and Russian statesmen alike must now

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bitterly regret their predecessors' mistakes, and the Russians can certainly not have forgotten what M. Hanotaux called to mind the other day, when he said that "in 1870 Russia helped Germany to conquer France by putting pressure on Austria and preventing her from taking part in the war."

The errors of the Congress of Berlin must be added to this past, which has partly brought about the present state of affairs, for they entailed the Balkan complications which at last caused the war. But, as I repeat, I have no intention of discussing all these questions here, for I shall have an opportunity of returning to them when we study the results which follow from errors of political psychology.

CHAPTER II

RACE-HATREDS

1. *Race-hatreds Resulting from Differences of Mental Make-up*

THE ancient race-hatreds of the Balkan nations are at the bottom of the present war, as of many an older one ; but before laying any stress upon their results it is necessary to give a careful statement of the causes to which they are due.

As we shall see later on, such hatreds may be intensified by divergencies of interest, but the causes which produce them lie far deeper. They arise chiefly from the fact that men who inherit different mentalities are impressed diversely by the same phenomena, and hence react differently under identical stimuli ; for, as they feel and act differently from one another they cannot share the same sentiments or admit the same evidence, and consequently are unable to comprehend one another.

Of course, it is easy for men of all countries to agree about scientific and technical questions which lie within the sphere of the intellect ; but when they consider political, religious, or social matters, as well as most subjects of their everyday lives, they are under the sway of affective, mystic, or collective impulses, and no matter how lofty an intellectual

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level they may have attained, they cannot understand one another. This lack of mutual comprehension is due chiefly to the fact that most of their opinions are derived from suggestions of the environment acting upon the unconscious hereditary elements of which racial character is made up. And not only do men of different races not understand one another, but it is most difficult for them to conceive the idea that any one can have another point of view than their own. This is not at all surprising, however, because we must always be able to substitute another person's mentality for our own if we wish to understand him thoroughly well.

The use of a common language can do no more than partially conceal the differences of feeling which divide mankind, for even though people may speak the same tongue, the same words do not call up identical images in their minds. The content of words varies according to the mentality of the persons who employ them. Concrete words, that is to say those which designate an object whose meaning is well defined, are the only ones which have an objective, universal, and invariable meaning ; for all abstract words, like soul, liberty, nature, and so forth, are purely individual in their signification. They are subjective terms, which every one explains according to his pleasure.

The lack of mutual understanding which presides over the intercourse of the different nations does not prevent them from having courteous relationships with one another, or from making treaties to reconcile their interests. But if they wish their friendly relations to endure they must not become

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too intimate, lest their sentimental differences should clash; for, though reason may be international, the feelings may not.

2. *Race-hatreds Resulting from Differences of Religion and Material Interests.*

Differences of religion and material interests still further intensify the hatreds which are natural to the various races, for they are strong enough to create violent antipathies even between men of the same country.

I need scarcely mention the hatreds produced by religious differences, for their violence is sufficiently demonstrated by the religious wars and persecutions with which our history is filled. I shall therefore pass them by and shall speak here only of the antipathies which are occasioned by differences of economic interest.

I may mention as an example of these the detestation felt by the Germans for the English. They are two nations which are ethnically not very far removed from one another, but their commercial competition in various parts of the world has made them irreconcilable enemies. Germany's powerful fleet was built and equipped at great expense in order to combat her British rivals, and England was represented by many a Teutonic newspaper as the enemy who must be destroyed at any cost. Nor was this hatred less prevalent among the learned than among the common people, as may be seen from the following remarks of Professor Eduard Meyer of the University of Berlin :—

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“The next century will be characterized by irreconcilable opposition and hatred between England and Germany. We all feel and know that England is our mortal enemy and wishes to destroy our national existence and independent civilization. There may be outward peace between us, but we cannot cross the abyss which has opened at our feet, and many generations will follow one another before any idea of reconciliation can arise” (*Scientia*, March 1, 1915).

Germany's detestation of England is not only a hatred as between competitors, but as between men whose feelings are absolutely opposed to one another. The German, who is convinced that he belongs to a superior race, is furious at England's supremacy in every part of the globe, and looks upon the growth of her wealth and power as a flagrant injustice. German philosophers and writers have continually preached against her as an enemy of the human race, and have represented her power as a mere show to be overthrown by the first contact with Germany.

Doctor Lenard, a Heidelberg professor, whose name was signed to the appeal of the intellectuals, has written a pamphlet from which M. Hovelague gives this quotation :—

“We must destroy that inner home and high abode of all the world's hypocrisy on the banks of the Thames. Let no respect be shown for the tombs of Shakespeare, Newton, or Faraday. . . . There can be no real peace with a highway robber until he has perished or been destroyed. The struggle against this bandit is far more than a

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struggle for the life and honour of the Fatherland; it is a crusade to affirm the existence of honesty upon earth" (*Revue de Paris*, March 4, 1915).

From the preceding remarks by two scholars, of whom one at least is celebrated, it may be imagined what wrath is felt by ordinary writers. In their case it does not stop at England, but includes all the other nations, and reminds one of the hatred which the true believer feels towards the infidel and the devotee towards those who despise his god. Some idea of the tone of these documents may be had from the following extract published by a German newspaper in America:—

"When we have humbled our enemies and confiscated their lands, let but any one of the former natives of the soil, be he English, French, Italian, American, or a man of any other lower race, lift up his voice louder than a sigh, and we will dash him to pieces against the earth.

"And after we have demolished their worm-eaten cathedrals and the rest of their hideous structures, together with the temples of India and the other countries of heathendom, we will build much bigger cathedrals and more splendid temples in which to honour our noble Kaiser and the great deeds of his people, who are the destroyers of the rotten races of the world.

"Oh! how we thank God for having chosen our great and incomparable Kaiser and his people to accomplish this mighty mission; for has Darwin not said (and no doubt he borrowed this idea from our great German professors) that only the fittest

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shall survive? And are the Germans not the fittest in all things? Therefore let all of us Germans say: Perish the carrion! Only the Germans are noble men." (Quoted in the *Temps*, June 29, 1915.)

Such is the singular vision which the Germans have formed of the other races. It is marvellous that both the masses and the scholars of such an educated nation should be so profoundly ignorant of the men who surround them. Dominated by the theories of his professors, the Teuton views the world through their teachings alone, and no doubt it is this lack of understanding which made his diplomats so short-sighted before the war.

3. *Race-hatreds Resulting from Differences of Political Ideas.*

The mentality of a race helps to decide its political system, or at all events that which it is willing to accept. We have seen how readily the German mentality submitted to the Prussian system of State Socialism, to which the people are in fact so accustomed at the present time that they not only cannot conceive of any other, but wish to impose it upon all the rest of the nations.

The German conscience is a collective conscience ruled by the State, while that of the Englishman or American is an individual conscience which surrenders only a very small part of itself to the collectivity.

Germany's triumph would mean the end of liberty in Europe, whose ultimate decline would be ushered

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in by the supremacy of military despotism. Gladly do I echo the words of Sir Edward Grey: "I would rather die or leave the Continent for ever than live under similar conditions."

We have here, as we have seen, an utter incompatibility between the political ideas of Germany and those of the other nations, and this alone would have been enough to create irreconcilable hatreds between them.

4. Part Played by Race-hatreds in Political Conflicts

The question of race has played an exceedingly important part in the political life of the nations and will long continue to do so ; but we should substitute the term "nationality" for the word "race," although the former does not imply any idea of ethnical identity.

In so far as we can understand their rather changeable ideas, statesmen designate by the word "nationality" those groups of individuals which have acquired a certain amount of cohesion from various causes, such as race, religion, customs, language, and so forth.

In spite of its weaknesses the idea of nationality tends to become the guiding principle in the formation of modern political groups, and to take the place of the old doctrine of equilibrium, which was perhaps not very much more to be trusted, though probably less dangerous.

The future political basis of Europe will be a very difficult matter to settle, because the nationali-

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ties at present united under one and the same monarchy are so extremely unlike that, as soon as they have separated into their component parts, they will indubitably end by fighting one another.

The Austrian Empire, in particular, is composed of nations which are divided in some cases by their origin, in others by religion or language, or yet again by manners and customs, and which have never yet blended. It contains 12,000,000 Germans, 10,000,000 Magyars, 6,500,000 Czechs, 5,000,000 Poles, 3,500,000 Ruthenians, 4,000,000 Latin half-breeds (Roumanians and Italians), and so forth. The German and Hungarian elements were on bad terms for years, but they have now come to an understanding which enables them to impose their hegemony upon all the other races of the Empire.

If Austria is conquered all these nationalities will of course disintegrate. Transylvania, Dalmatia, Galicia, Herzegovina, Hungary, and the rest will endeavour to break away from the Empire and set up small States, but even these will be totally lacking in homogeneity, because they are themselves agglomerations of races which have no kinship with one another.

A similar medley is seen in all the Balkan States, which are composed of races divided by religion, language, aspirations, and everything else. According to statistics published by the *Revue*, Transylvania and Bukovina, which are claimed by Roumania, include the following nationalities:—

“Transylvania has 1,540,000 Roumanians, as compared with 380,000 Hungarians, 560,000

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Czechs, 234,000 Germans, and 54,000 members of various other nationalities, while in Bukovina the census gives 208,000 Roumanians, 268,000 Ruthenians, 91,000 Russians, 50,000 Germans, 25,000 Poles, and about 8,000 Hungarians."

The danger of these mixed populations lies in the fact that, for the psychological reasons which I have explained before, they hate one another madly, and if they are not ruled with a rod of iron, indulge in ferocious massacres, as the second Balkan War clearly proved.

The small Balkan States were forced to live at peace as long as they were under Turkish sway, but when they succeeded in freeing themselves from Moslem domination by forming a temporary alliance, they turned furiously upon one another before their victory was cold. Serbia and Greece crushed their ally of a day, and now Bulgaria waits only for a propitious moment to take her revenge.

What are called the aspirations of all these nations are simply their longings to seize the territories of their neighbours, and their desire to massacre as many of the rightful owners as possible. Bulgaria covets Macedonia and a part of Serbia. Serbia wishes to annex a portion of Bulgaria and the whole of Bosnia. Roumania aspires to the possession of Transylvania and Bessarabia, and Greece hopes to dominate all of Macedonia, Albania, the Islands off the coast of Asia Minor, and so forth. As a Swiss newspaper says:—

"It is the misfortune of these countries that the different nationalities must occupy the same territories, though they cannot relinquish their ancient,

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inveterate, mutual hatreds, nor give one another the right to dwell side by side, each speaking its own language, bringing up its children as it likes, and living in accordance with its own manners and customs. The stronger cannot keep from oppressing the weaker, as may be seen in the Macedonian districts which were allotted to the Greeks and Serbians by the Treaty of Bucharest."

The same remark has also been made with regard to the body of 3,000,000 Roumanians in the Hungarian possessions of Austria :—

"They are considered a national peril and treated as such, for they are subjected to the most abominable system of violence and despotism. Equality of civil and political rights according to the constitution is a phrase which has no meaning for them. The courts systematically refuse to give them protection, the privilege of meeting and forming associations is practically denied them, their newspapers are gagged by the censorship, and under the slightest pretext the editors are punished by fines and sentences of month-long imprisonment."

The Balkan States fought for a change of masters, but they have gained nothing by it, for a civilized ruler may be the most cruel of all, when he claims the right to interfere with all the details of social life and enforces it by his administrative system. Many of the Balkan peoples already regret that they are no longer under the domination of the Turk.

The race problem is one whose difficulties are growing greater. The older diplomacy showed its wisdom by endeavouring not to meddle with it,

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and by making as few changes as possible in the equilibria which had at last become established in the Near East ; but all this will be undone by the European War, and the aspirations which time, tradition, and necessary conditions of every sort had moderated will be let loose upon the world once more.

There will be many a frightful conflict before a new equilibrium can be set up between all these opposing hatreds and ambitions ; for, if the inimical races which stand face to face are given too much liberty they will tear and rend one another, while if they are curbed they will revolt.

CHAPTER III

GERMANY'S AGGRESSIVE ATTITUDE—THE IDEA OF *REVANCHE*

1. *Germany's Aggressive Attitude*

WE have already shown how Germany's economic progress was brought about and how she took the lead of all her rivals, only to encounter their competition in every quarter of the globe. This constantly increasing material development had an important psychological influence upon the character of her people, for as soon as they became aware of their universal commercial supremacy and the continual growth of their army and navy, they had no trouble in persuading themselves that they were the representatives of a race which was intellectually without a peer.

Fostered by German professors and publicists, Teutonic vanity at last broke all bounds, for collective pride is a passion of rapid growth; and soon the whole nation became convinced that it had been chosen by God to dominate the world.

Professor Lasson of the University of Berlin has already been quoted by me. He sums up the ideas of this school of thought in the following declaration :—

"A stranger is an enemy until there is proof

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to the contrary. . . . Morally and intellectually we are superior to all others ; we are beyond comparison. . . . God is with us."

On such a declivity there was no stopping, and day by day the idea of universal hegemony assumed greater prominence, until at the present time a writer like Herr Chamberlain makes such statements as this :—

"There is no duty more momentous and imperative than to impose the German language upon the world. Whether this be done now or in the future matters little ; but the duty of every German is always and everywhere to compel foreigners to speak his language, until it secures the same universal triumph as the army of the German nation is winning by force of arms ! . . . People must be taught that any one who does not know German is a pariah ! German must become the universal language ! "

During the years which preceded the war Germany had not yet reached such a pitch of collective vanity as this, but she was rapidly approaching it, and ever as her ambitions grew, her diplomacy assumed a more domineering and provocative tone. Even the French pacifists felt very clearly that they would have to make up their minds to defend themselves or else to fall very low in the scale of nations, and when war was declared there was a general cry that this state of things could not have been tolerated much longer.

It is quite true that Germany's arrogant bearing never exceeded the limits of what is permissible in diplomatic language ; but, nevertheless, every

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Frenchman knew what was meant, and the humiliation was keenly felt. A continuous series of threats emanated from the German statesmen, and the Kaiser's speeches, with their everlasting advice about "keeping one's powder dry" and "one's sword sharpened," were even more truculent. France gave way in every case, but this did not prevent the German attitude from becoming less and less conciliatory, as was seen upon several occasions in Morocco, as well as in the Balkans and in connection with Austria's annexation of Herzegovina. A Frenchman's opinion is naturally open to suspicion, however, and accordingly I prefer to quote the following neutral view:—

"Germany's behaviour was becoming more and more threatening, her claims broader, and her will to have a voice in every decision more boldly asserted, while France exhibited increasing prudence and reserve, together with a disposition to make the utmost concessions in her power and a desire to interfere with her rival as little as possible. Not only did France keep to the right, but it seemed as though she had made it her principle to accept of her own accord what was, strictly speaking, less than her right. Indeed, she sacrificed what impartial witnesses considered her legitimate interests in order that she might not arouse the slightest suspicion of ambition, or of stirring things up with a view to conquest.

"The excessive forbearance of France troubled her friends, who looked upon her diminishing influence with sorrow; it alarmed those who loved peace, for they knew well enough that such conces-

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sions would never appease Germany, but would simply encourage her to embark upon a policy of boundless and unreasonable demands, which would inevitably end in war; and it frightened the small nations who were concerned for their independence and anxiously asked themselves how far Germany would encroach upon them, now that there was nothing to counterbalance her power.

"We had not forgotten the Förstner affair, that crisis of acute nationalism and warlike arrogance, in which Germany asserted herself and measured her moral forces with those of the enemy, before proceeding to the attack. All the circumstances connected with it were so obnoxious to France that disinterested people asked themselves whether it was not one of those tests of strength to which Germany often resorts, and which are meant to entail war or her enemy's humiliation. In 1913 Germany trod Alsace beneath her feet, while France looked on, mute and indignant. Yet France stood the test, her Press was admirably cool, and the President of the Republic went to dine with the German Ambassador while the Förstner affair was at its height" (*Gazette de Lausanne*, March 24, 1915).

Every detail in the above quotation is strictly true. The history of Franco-German relations during the past few years makes it evident to one's mind that France could not have refused to fight unless she had resigned herself to the lowest place among civilized nations. Even if the outbreak of the war could have been postponed, it would have been for a short time only, because no matter how

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much the Emperor of Germany loved peace, he would have been obliged to declare hostilities in order to keep his mastery over an army which had become strong enough to make its will supreme.

There are countless passages in the *Yellow Book* showing how overweening the Germans had become. When their military preparations obliged France to resume her system of three years' service in the army, a member of the Reichstag exclaimed: "This is a provocation which we will not permit." And many German military men, as well as civilians, publicly declared that as France had a population of only forty millions, she had no right to compete with Germany. Indeed, ever since the beginning of the Morocco crisis the Teutonic Empire has believed that it could treat us as it chose—and we have endured everything.

2. *The Idea of Revanche.*

The idea that the French wished to avenge the war of 1870 is one of the indirect causes of the present conflict, because of the fear which it has always inspired in Germany.

When Bismarck opposed the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine and only consented to demand it, as we are told, under pressure from the military party, it almost seems as though he must have foreseen the future; for the armed preparations which it entailed certainly cost Germany far more than she gained by it. Less harsh behaviour and a more kindly form of administration would no doubt have won the hearts of the Alsatians in the

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end, and France would never have thought of claiming the return of a province which had been Germanized in such a manner; but this course of conduct was obviously impossible for Germany, and the Alsatians, who had always been fond of their independence, found the Teutonic military system intolerable, although the Germans themselves did not object to it.

In spite of these things there is no doubt that the present generation in France had quite forgotten the *revanche* idea, and although the German Press frequently alluded to it, this was only for the sake of justifying the Government's incessant demands for military credits. By constant repetition the rulers of the German people had finally persuaded them that France was simply looking for an excuse to declare war, and it is, and long will be, their firm conviction that she has now accepted with alacrity the first opportunity of coming to blows with them.

French politicians had almost entirely relinquished the *revanche* idea, but still the problem of Alsace-Lorraine caused a great deal of coolness in the relations between the two countries. The French Ambassador to Germany tells me that the Kaiser often spoke of his desire to live on amicable terms with France; but one must admit that the tone of German diplomacy, which was inspired by him, was always rough and aggressive in Morocco and elsewhere.

The problem of Alsace-Lorraine is certainly one of the important remote causes of the war, though by indirection only. At all events, it was constantly

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used as a means to inflame the German people against the French and to augment their military power enormously. Without this pretext Germany's warlike preparations would perhaps never have reached the figure which was to make hostilities inevitable sooner or later.

CHAPTER IV

THE PART PLAYED BY MYSTIC INFLUENCES IN THE GENESIS OF THE WAR. THE HEGEMONY IDEAL

1. *Mystic Forces in the European War*

ALL nations, savage and civilized alike, are swayed by mystic ideals which are more powerful than any influence exerted by reason.

The mystic impulse which of old led the Carthaginians to sacrifice their children to Moloch as a hallowed rite, and that which induced the American Indian to scalp his prisoners for the greater honour of his tribal fetishes, were of the same sort as that which prompted the Moslems to conquer a vast empire wherein to disseminate the glory of Allah, and that which has impelled the Germans of our own day to devastate flourishing cities with the idea of securing the supremacy of their race.

The great strength of such mystic impulses lies in the fact that they have no rational basis. If the ideal which they synthesize were to become rational, men would not let themselves be killed for it; for the reason which rules a learned man in his laboratory has not yet acquired the power to rouse the masses.

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An ideal must pass through successive stages before it slowly assumes a mystic shape, as we shall see when we attempt to discover how the mystic ideal of a world-hegemony was formed in Germany. Our investigation will show what were the elements that surrounded it from the beginning; for in history there are no simple causes, but each is accompanied by a train of secondary influences which are at first effects and then become causes in their own turn.

Mysticism, which is the determining cause of the conflict that Germany has let loose upon the world, had for a long time no influence over any but the smallest circles in that country, for only at the declaration of war did it develop into an influence among all classes of society, and from the dream of the few become a universal ideal.

2. *Ethnic Origins of the Hegemony Ideal.*

There are few nations which have not a belief in their own superiority to the rest of mankind; for even the Chinese and the Turks share this view, which is really a form of collective vanity. It may, of course, act as a useful incentive; but, unfortunately, it sometimes leads those who have faith in such a fancied pre-eminence into attempts to impose themselves upon their neighbours by force of arms.

A vast number of books, most of which have been published during the last thirty years, demonstrate that the Germans have a greater conception of their own superiority than was ever before

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entertained by any nation, except perhaps by the Jews of Bible times and the Arabs of Mohammed's day. This idea is based chiefly upon the illusion that the German race, which is actually composed of the most heterogeneous elements, is a chosen race, specially selected by God for the conquest and subsequent exploitation of the world.

The two historians who have done most to inculcate this doctrine are Treitschke and Lamprecht, and their example has been followed by an innumerable host of second-rate pamphleteers, like the loquacious Herr Chamberlain. The rambling remarks with which their works abound furnish the alienist with excellent examples of the breakdown of equilibrium characteristic of the great collective psychoses, and reach a height of megalomania never attained before in all the unhealthy manifestations which have frequently occurred during the course of the centuries.

In Treitschke's eyes history is simply a divinely regulated development whose object is to secure the triumph of the Protestant faith, and he considers that the conquest of the world has been set apart for the German race, which owes its greatness to Luther. With this reformer, indeed, the progress of humanity begins.

Some of Treitschke's statements do not exhibit this sort of childish arrogance, but, like the following, are more justifiable :—

“ It is action, not thought, which decides the fate of nations ; but although a nation amounts to nothing without action, still action in turn can do nothing without a guiding thought. The fate of

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nations has been altered by the mere introduction of certain religious and political ideas into the world."

Treitschke has scored a great success because he interprets the aspirations of the German spirit, whose orientation is not due to Protestantism, however, as he believes, but to the inflexible corporals of the Prussian military system.

He bases his assertions of Germany's superiority upon the theory of divine intervention, while Lamprecht takes a more materialistic view, and although his principal object, like Treitschke's, is to demonstrate that the German race is appointed to regenerate the world, he does not appeal to the mysterious designs of a Providence whose existence he considers open to argument. His view is that humanity owes everything to itself, and that Catholicism as well as Protestantism are superannuated beliefs which will doubtless be replaced by some new faith.

He looks upon the economic evolution of a nation as the greatest factor in its history, and extols Germany's industrial progress; but declares that peaceable competition between nations necessarily leads to war as soon as one of the competitors acquires the requisite power to impose its will. I may mention that this is one of the ideas most widely held in Germany.

It is needless to say that, like all his compatriots, Lamprecht is a State Socialist, and not only calls upon the Government to intervene on all occasions, but counts upon it for every sort of activity, including war as a matter of course. His ethical

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system is very like the obstreperous one of Nietzsche, and discards the old morality of Christianity as an unprofitable superfluity.

Lamprecht's schemes of conquest plainly disclose the ambitions which the teachings of the universities have evolved in the German mind. His idea is that Germany should annex Switzerland, Holland, and Belgium, while countries like Chili, Brazil, and so forth, which might be difficult to conquer, should be Germanized by founding schools and establishing banks and factories. The other nations, such as Russia and Italy, which cannot yet be reduced to subjection, are afterwards to be Germanized in the same way—in short, Germany is ultimately to rule Europe and the rest of the world.

One might multiply passages like the above to an indefinite extent, for the same feeling exists in writers who are most unlike, and is sometimes formulated with cynical ingenuousness, as may be seen from the following remarks of Giesebrecht :—

“To dominate is Germany's privilege, because she is a noble nation, and her people are a chosen race, and therefore it is meet that she should act towards her neighbours in the same way as every man who is endowed with superior strength or brain has the right and duty to act towards the less gifted or weaker individuals who surround him.”

The celebrated Bluntschli goes to still greater lengths in proclaiming that :—

“Germany has an inalienable right to every spot upon which she has once set foot, nor is she bound to consider any treaty.”

The popular writers could do nothing but improve

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on all this, as Houston Chamberlain, one of the best known of them, has done in a ponderous compilation entitled *Die Grundlagen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, for which he is said to have been paid a large sum out of the privy purse by his appreciative Emperor. This work gratifies German pride beyond all measure, and has therefore been very successful, though as a matter of fact, the author's views are not at all original. In a fawning way he reiterates the statement that Germany is the foremost of nations, and bitterly regrets that in former invasions :—

“The Teuton has not exterminated his enemies root and branch wherever he has stretched out his conquering arm, and that as a result of this forbearance latinization, which really means a comingling with ethnic chaos, has once more deprived vast territories of the only influence which could have regenerated them. . . .”

If we were to argue like this author, we should consider it a great pity that the Romans had not drowned all the tribes of Germany in their swamps or burned them in their forests, instead of exterminating only a few hundred thousands of them from time to time. Had they done so the civilization of the world would have been very different from what it is to-day, and there would have been no Middle Ages at all.

The passages which I have quoted above are a sufficient demonstration of the mental development which had rendered it almost inevitable that Germany should make war upon the rest of Europe. They also prove how unprofitable it is to discuss

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whether the conflict was caused by one Emperor or the other, for a war whose origins are such as I have just explained may be postponed, but cannot be prevented.

3. *Economic and Military Origins of the Hegemony Ideal*

A merely theoretical assertion of their racial superiority would not have been enough to make the Germans consider it possible to put a system of universal domination into actual practice, and the notion was accordingly nothing but an idealist's dream at first. But the enormous increase of military strength and the development of industrial power in the German nation operated as two essential causes which seemed to work together for the realization of this dream.

The army, whose peace strength was 401,000 men in 1871, had gradually increased to 815,000, and a well-equipped fleet now aspired to rival that of England.

Such an enormous growth of military power furnishes a basis for ideas of hegemony, and accordingly they began to spread over Germany with great rapidity and to develop in Teutonic brains the ambitions which have been revealed to us by German diplomats and publicists ever since the beginning of the war.

These ambitions formed the subject of a very typical inquiry which the *Monistische Jahrhundert* set on foot among German scholars of wide repute. In its number of November 16, 1914, the celebrated

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Ernst Haeckel demands the partition of Belgium, the seizure of the British Colonies, the Congo, the frontier departments of France, the Baltic Provinces, and so forth. He only neglects to speak of annexing Italy and Spain because he has probably forgotten all about them.

The pacifist Ostwald has not quite such soaring ambitions ; but contents himself with a desire for the destruction of the British fleet and the abolition of all the European armies except the German army.

The other correspondents of this periodical have many different aspirations, but they all agree that Germany must take over the small States, which, as they think, have no right to exist.

The traditional methods for organizing conquest are rather slow, and so an ingenious professor by the name of Vierordt has written an article for the *Badische Landeszeitung* to show the urgent necessity of killing off Germany's enemies by the million in order that conquered territories may be transformed into deserts, to be populated subsequently by virtuous Germans.

These publications give most interesting indications with regard to the mentality of their authors, who long for a far more complete destruction of Europe than that which took place in Attila's day. Ostwald's followers would no doubt organize the unravished portions of the Continent into immense factories, where the unsparing lash of the Prussian corporal would keep millions of serfs toiling to enrich the Germans in general and the professors in particular.

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4. *Definitive Form Assumed by German Mysticism.*

We have just shown what influences created the mystic idea of hegemony in Germany and from what material elements it is derived.

Many students cannot understand the mystic side of Germany's ambitions, because her chimerical dreams have a solid, practical basis. For instance, M. Kostyleff, who belongs to the most mystic of races, says in an important review that he cannot see any influence of mysticism upon the modern German mentality, and even goes so far as to question whether a mystic belief can be generally held at the present time.

I am very much afraid that he, as well as the many persons who still share his views, have no clear idea of what we are to understand by the term mysticism. I have explained its meaning in the beginning of the present work, and readers of my books know the preponderant part it has played in the great events of history, more especially in the French Revolution. Its importance is still very little appreciated, in spite of the fact that its influence in the present war has been clearly indicated by many writers, like M. Chevrillon, for instance. I shall now give a few extracts from his study of German mysticism:—

“What is the meaning of the expression, *the chosen people*? It is an arrogant and mystic collective idea, as threatening to the rest of the world as other great historical propulsive forces of pride and mysticism have been in the past, and all the

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more dangerous because it grows simultaneously with the increase of Germanic strength and appetite, and with the doctrine which asserts their paramount right.

"The Germans are the instruments of God and the supreme embodiment of His abiding energy ; they are God working on earth, His spirit breaking down old and senescent forms in order to give them new life.

"This is the idea to which Germany holds fast and which feeds her pride ; this is what deifies her natural inclinations, changes the virtues of the ancient Christian morality, which still clogs her steps, into foibles and defects, sets her appetites before her as imperatives and her instincts as sublime perfections.

"In her eyes there is but one law, which is that of this life, and its function is not to desire goodness and truth, but the power to grow and expand and ever to surpass oneself, and, with this object in view, to hate, make war upon, destroy, or devour every alien and weaker creature."

This is where a mystic idea may lead one. Even while it seemed as though the whole progress of civilization were bent upon curbing man's primitive instincts, German philosophy was restoring them to new vigour and dedicating a mystic adoration to them. Force is queen in German eyes, and there is no place left for generosity and pity. A superior race cannot allow itself to be bound by the rules which govern other nations. To struggle against the chosen race is to struggle against the will of Providence, and to commit a crime so

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heinous that there are no punishments severe enough to atone for it.

For a long time these doctrines were mere theories, but hosts of professors slowly insinuated them into the German mind, and they became the true sources of the butchery and devastation which have so horrified the civilized world. Signor Pareti, an Italian, says :—

“ The faith of the Germans in their *Kultur* and in their *mission* to dominate the world as a chosen people, superior to all those of the past, present, and future, is certainly a real source of strength in war ; but it is also a cause of cruelty, especially in its theological or metaphysical form, which tends to give the conflict the character of a religious war. The adversary is not only an enemy, but an excommunicated heretic as well, a miscreant, a blasphemer of sacred *Kultur*, guilty of high treason against the all-holy. To conquer him is not enough ; he must be utterly destroyed. The Belgians committed the daring sacrilege of refusing to let the hallowed cohorts of divine *Kultur* pass through their territory. Thus they are guilty of high treason against the all-holy, and are *justly* punished to-day, as they were chastized of old by the Duke of Alba for a similar crime.”

5. *Summary of the Part Played by the Psychological Factors which Caused the War.*

The reader who has glanced through the chapters on the remote causes of the war may perhaps have noticed that motives of a biological, affective, or

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mystic order were the only ones mentioned in them, and that I have not spoken of rational factors at all. This is simply because reason has had little to do with the present conflict, as with most of the wars of history. Battles are, of course, fought with its aid; but it never occasions them, for it merely subserves the necessities which arise out of the mystic and affective impulses. Reason is here the slave and not the master.

If any of my readers are so imbued with the rationalism of the schools that they cannot at once grasp the truth of what I have just said, I advise them to recall the causes of the war. In doing so they will probably arrive at something like the following summary, in which I have not mentioned economic factors, but have included the psychological elements that animate the armies of the various countries. Affective, collective, and mystic motives will be found among them, but few rational ones, or none at all :—

1. *Austria*.—The affective influences which impelled this country to make war were primarily violent race-hatreds against the Serbians, who had taken advantage of Europe's efforts for peace to irritate their powerful neighbour during the second Balkan War, and in whose territory the plot which led to the assassination of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the Austrian throne, had been fomented. Austrian hatred of this small nation was accordingly at white heat, and public opinion developed into a powerful collective influence, which demanded war.

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2. *Russia*.—Affective influences were at work here in the form of wounded self-respect, accumulated animosity because of Austria's seizure of Bosnia, and a fear of losing all prestige among the Slavs if an attack on Serbia were permitted.

3. *France*.—The predominant affective influence in France was the feeling of honour which obliged her to stand by her allies, although their cause did not interest her in the least. The collective influences which swayed the country took the concrete form of a general desire not to endure Germany's arrogance any longer.

4. *England*.—The influences which made themselves felt here were affective at the start, and were represented by the moral obligation to protect Belgium, whose neutrality England had guaranteed by treaty. The fear of allowing a rival Power to seize Antwerp and thus paralyse British commerce was soon added to this sentiment of probity.

5. *Germany*.—The only influences that operated at first were affective ones, which may be summed up as Germany's desire to show Europe the strength of her hegemony by humiliating Russia again and by forcing that country to submit without a struggle, as had happened when Bosnia had been annexed by Austria several years before. But as soon as war was declared there was an outburst of the mystic influences which had prepared the way for it, and which were synthesized by an ideal of universal domination.

The preceding summary shows the small influence which was exerted by rational elements at the

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beginning of the war. In the case of Germany this is an especially striking fact ; for if rational logic had played any part at all in the will of her rulers it would have caused them to avoid hostilities at all costs, as I have already demonstrated. It is perfectly obvious, indeed, and cannot be repeated too often, that the progress of Germany's industry and commerce and the universal infiltration of her subjects into other countries would soon have given her peaceable possession of what she will never obtain by force of arms, even though fifty years of battles lay behind her and she should succeed in conquering Europe. From a rational point of view Germany was interested in preventing war, but mystic influences dominated her entirely, and her example may be added to those which I have already given in another work to show how far the mystic surpasses the rational. Everything yields to it.

* * *

Our investigation into the remote causes of the war is ended, and the conclusions derived from it are so clear that the other chapters, which deal with the immediate causes, may seem superfluous to the reader.

But even though it is practically rather unprofitable to inquire why this war, which the Germans had so long heralded as inevitable, broke out at one time rather than at another, nevertheless it is most interesting, from the psychological point of view, to study the workings of that graduated scale of passions and emotions whose combination

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was to precipitate the catastrophe at a given moment. There is no more touching sight than the struggles of the peace-loving diplomats who were pitted against the haughty forces which were driving them into a terrible war. Never in the course of the ages has there, perhaps, been a better opportunity of seeing how men's conduct is sometimes dominated by unconscious influences whose pressure is so great that no will can withstand them.

BOOK IV
THE IMMEDIATE CAUSES OF
THE WAR

CHAPTER I

THE AUSTRIAN ULTIMATUM AND THE WEEK OF DIPLOMATIC CONVERSATIONS

1. *Psychological Lessons Taught by the Diplomatic Documents*

THE only official documents which deal with the origins of the war and are known at the present time are the reports from the Ambassadors of the various Powers to their respective Governments. They form the subject-matter of several publications which are called the *Blue Book*, *Yellow Book*, *White Book*, and so forth,¹ and have a good deal

¹ The *Blue Book*, which is devoted almost entirely to the correspondence of British Ambassadors abroad with the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, was published in English and afterwards in French by the British Government. A second French translation subsequently appeared in Paris. It differs from the first only in some unimportant particulars. The *Yellow Book*, which was published later, contains various documents collected by the French Government, and has appeared in two editions of different size, of which the first only was issued at the Imprimerie Nationale. An English translation was given as a free supplement by the English *Times*. A *Grey Book* has been issued by Belgium. The *White Book* published by Germany contains few documents, and the Russian *Orange Book* gives no new information. I shall make use almost entirely of the *Blue Book* and the *Yellow Book*, which are so well known that I have not thought it necessary to indicate the page numbers, which in any case vary according to the different editions.

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of psychological importance, especially as showing how sentimental and mystic impulses surpass rational ones, and how easily governments may be led to act in opposition to their own wishes.

Germany and Austria were drawn into the war by a series of psychological errors, among which was the conviction that France, England, and Russia would not intervene. When Germany saw that Russia was not only not yielding to her threats, as she had anticipated, but was mobilizing, she feared to let her adversaries get the start of her in their military preparations, and in obedience both to the suggestions of the military party and to her own conviction that England would remain neutral, made a demand of Russia to demobilize. When Russia refused, Germany declared war upon her.

What I have here summed up in a few lines did not by any means happen so simply, for human resolves are not born in a day, nor do they take definite shape immediately, as we shall presently see. This chapter and the next will show how hesitant and perplexed England was before she decided to engage in a conflict from which she wanted to keep her distance at first ; and also how the Emperor of Germany was led by successive stages to wage a war so contrary to his own interests.

It requires only a little attention to read all this quite easily between the lines of the official documents, which, however, are so confused and in so many cases conceal the main points at issue under subordinate circumstances, that I have felt it necessary to select the portions which are of fundamental

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importance, and to classify them from the psychological standpoint. With this object I have brought together phenomena of the same class, such as the hesitation of England, Austria's uncompromising attitude, erroneous ideas with regard to the neutrality of Russia, and so forth.

The documents which summarize the labours of the week in which these diplomatic conversations were taking place did not have to consider the remote causes of the war as we have examined them in the preceding chapters, and on this account one would not be at all well informed about the real origins of the conflict if one examined no other evidence. They are the plain story of the efforts made to prevent the falling of the drop of water which was sure to make the glass overflow sooner or later. But the real problem is rather to find out who had been slowly filling the glass than who poured the last drop of water into it.

The period of discussion was very brief, for one short week sufficed to change the history of the world.

If a writer had no previous documents before him, and were limited to this diplomatic correspondence alone, he would be tempted to answer the question of who wanted the war by saying, no one. And, as a matter of fact, no one did want it, and everybody feared it; but, nevertheless, war broke out, and in so doing has furnished a memorable example of how powerless the heads of governments are when confronted by the fatal complications which create men's passions and emotions.

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Three out of the four sovereigns who signed the declaration of war were autocrats, absolute masters on land and sea ; but their despotic power was not of the slightest help to them, for once more the will of kings was the sport of Destiny, which by the ancients was called lord of both gods and men.

Modern science is more discerning than was the wisdom of antiquity, however, and can at least separate destiny into the elements of whose sum total are composed the forces which at certain times rise superior to the wills of all mankind.

Before attempting to glean the information which the diplomatic correspondence may have to give us, I shall make a short list of the successive events which took place during the week of diplomatic conversations.

2. The Week of Diplomatic Conversations.

The week which elapsed between the 23rd of July and the 1st of August, 1914, will rank as one of the most dramatic in history, for it was to end in a war which is destined to change the face of Europe.

The following is a summary of what happened day by day during this short period :—

Thursday, July 23rd.—The Powers are informed that in consequence of the assassination at Sarajevo of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, the Austrian heir-presumptive, Austria has sent Serbia an ultimatum, whose principal demand is that the latter

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shall accept the collaboration of representatives of the Austro-Hungarian Government "for the suppression of the subversive movement directed against the territorial integrity of the Monarchy."

Friday, July 24th.—Russia asks Austria to grant an extension of the time limit fixed by her ultimatum to Serbia. The German Ambassador at Paris announces his Government's desire that the conflict may be localized to Austria and Serbia.

Saturday, July 25th.—Austria refuses to extend the time limit imposed upon Serbia.

England proposes that she herself, together with Germany and Italy, shall mediate between Austria and Russia.

Germany is convinced by the statements of England that the latter Power will remain neutral.

Sunday, July 26th.—Russia intervenes at Vienna in favour of Serbia and asks Germany's co-operation. Austria orders partial mobilization.

Monday, July 27th.—According to the *Blue Book* (No. 46) Germany accepts in principle mediation between Austria and Russia by the four Powers. But according to the *Orange Book* (No. 34) the German Ambassador at Paris "insisted that the idea of any possible mediation or conference must be excluded."

Tuesday, July 28th.—Germany countenances Austria's uncompromising attitude, and the latter orders general mobilization and declares war against Serbia. Russia then requests England's mediation.

Wednesday, July 29th.—Germany appears momentarily to favour a peaceful solution, and advises the resumption of conversations between

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St. Petersburg and Vienna. Owing to the fact that Austria has mobilized in spite of the diplomatic conversations, Russia orders partial mobilization in the districts bordering on Austria.

Germany threatens to mobilize if Russia does not put a stop to her military preparations. Russia states that she cannot do so, because the Austrian attitude is maintained.

Thursday, July 30th.—Russia promises to put a stop to her military preparations if Austria will admit that her quarrel with Serbia is of European interest.

The German Ambassador at St. Petersburg appears deeply moved upon seeing that war is inevitable, and implores the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs to make any sort of proposal which he can telegraph to his Government as a last hope.

Friday, July 31st.—Conversations are resumed between Russia and Austria, which latter accepts an English formula as a basis for mediation; but Germany announces that the Russian military preparations oblige her to make similar ones.

Saturday, August 1st.—Germany sends an ultimatum to Russia, requiring her to demobilize within twelve hours. Austria reconsiders her previous statements and announces her willingness to recognize that Europe has an interest to intervene in her quarrel.

Russia makes another attempt to avert war by stating that she will be satisfied with an assurance of the independence and territorial integrity of Serbia. It is too late. At seven o'clock in the evening Germany declares war against Russia.

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August 3rd.—Germany declares war against France.

I shall now devote a series of paragraphs to a study of the events which have been briefly summarized in the preceding list, paying special attention to the psychological factors upon which they are based.

3. *Austria's Grievances against Serbia and her Fixed Idea of Making War upon that Country. Her Uncompromising Attitude during the Diplomatic Conversations.*

Following the assassination of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir-presumptive to the Austrian throne, the Dual Monarchy, which ascribed the murder to a Serbian plot, and which had for a long time had reason to complain of Serbia, sent that country an ultimatum whose terms were obviously unacceptable. The principal item was that Serbia was to bind herself —

“To accept the collaboration in Serbia of representatives of the Austro-Hungarian Government for the suppression of the subversive movement directed against the territorial integrity of the Monarchy.”

As soon as the Great Powers learned of this ultimatum they realized that it was simply an Austrian pretext to penetrate into Serbia.

On July 23, 1914, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs had intelligence that :—

“According to information gathered by the

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French Ambassador at Vienna, the Austro-Hungarian Government's first intention was to proceed against Serbia with the greatest severity, whilst keeping eight army corps ready to take the field."

On the 24th of July the French Ambassador to Russia called attention to the fact that:—

"The delay given by the ultimatum is so limited that it increases the difficulties in the way of the restraining influence which the Powers of the Triple Entente might otherwise exert at Vienna."

But in any case the diplomats had no illusions on the score of Austria's intentions, for the British Ambassador at Vienna wrote on the 24th of July:—

"Russian Chargé d'Affaires was received this morning by Minister for Foreign Affairs, and said to him, as his own personal view, that Austrian Note was drawn up in a form rendering it impossible of acceptance as it stood, and that it was both unusual and peremptory in its terms. Minister for Foreign Affairs replied that Austrian Minister was under instructions to leave Belgrade unless Austrian demands were accepted integrally by 4 p.m. to-morrow."

The Serbian Government were terrified and signified their disposition to accept almost all the demands of Austria; but their concessions were useless, as we learn from the report sent by the British Chargé d'Affaires at Berlin to his Government on the 25th of July, with regard to the results of a conversation which he had had with the Secretary of State at Berlin:—

"Secretary of State said that he did not know what Austria-Hungary had ready on the spot, but

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he admitted quite freely that Austro-Hungarian Government wished to give the Serbians a lesson, and that they meant to take military action."

The French Ambassador at Vienna informed his Government on the 25th of July that :—

" . . . The Austrian Government are determined to inflict a humiliation upon Serbia, and will not accept intervention from any Power until the blow has been struck and received full in Serbia's face."

All the Ambassadors had the same impression with regard to Austria's intentions. On the 27th of July the British Ambassador at Vienna wrote :—

" I have had conversations with all my colleagues representing the Great Powers. The impression left on my mind is that the Austro-Hungarian note was so drawn up as to make war inevitable."

To justify her uncompromising attitude Austria published the following Note :—

" Serbia has for a long time been agitating to separate the Southern Slavs from the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, in order to unite them in a great Serb State. This propaganda on Serbian soil has always had the same object, although it has employed different means, and has been more or less violent upon different occasions. Its culminating point was reached at the time of the annexation crisis."

Serbia was becoming more and more uneasy, and at last accepted all the Austrian demands. The British Ambassador at Rome wrote on the 28th of July :—

" In a long conversation this morning Serbian Chargé d'Affaires said he thought that if some

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explanations were given regarding mode in which Austrian agents would require to intervene under article 5 and article 6, Serbia might still accept the whole Austrian note."

The Austrian Government, however, maintained their uncompromising attitude, and on the 28th of July the British Ambassador at Vienna telegraphed his Government :—

" I am informed by the Russian Ambassador that the Russian Government's suggestion has been declined by the Austro-Hungarian Government. The suggestion was to the effect that the means of settling the Austro-Serbian conflict should be discussed directly between the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Austrian Ambassador at St. Petersburg."

Austria did not change her mind, as the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs was obliged to admit in the following Note of the 29th of July :—

" The inference of all I have heard from Vienna and Berlin is that Austria will not accept any form of mediation by the Powers as between Austria and Serbia."

By way of making her plans known Austria declared war against Serbia on the 28th of July, without awaiting the result of the diplomatic conversations. She seemed to have large desires of conquest, if one may judge by the following dispatch from the British Chargé d'Affaires at Constantinople, dated the 29th of July :—

" I understand that the designs of Austria may extend considerably beyond the sanjak and a puni-

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tive occupation of Serbian territory. I gathered this from a remark let fall by the Austrian Ambassador here, who spoke of the deplorable economic situation of Salonica under Greek administration, and of the assistance on which the Austrian army could count from Mussulman population discontented with Serbian rule."

Considering Austria's immense strength as compared with that of Serbia, her active army should have been sufficient to conquer that small country, but it seemed as though she foresaw complications, since, in spite of the enormous expense of such an operation, she called out her entire male population, as we are told by the following dispatch from the French Ambassador at Vienna under date of the 31st of July :—

"The mobilization of all men between the ages of nineteen and forty-two years was ordered by the Austro-Hungarian Government early this morning."

4. Conviction of Austria and Germany that Russia and France were Militarily too Weak to Intervene.

Why was Austria, backed by her German ally, so uncompromising, and why, for the sake of an object so trifling, did she expose herself to a general conflagration which might involve her own disappearance?

Her decision was dictated by a very simple psychological reason. Austria and Germany were convinced that Russia, who was the only Power interested in the matter, would not intervene, and they had solid grounds for believing so, because

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Austria had seized Bosnia several years previously, and although Bosnia was still more important than Serbia, Russia had not dreamed of opposing anything but a protest to Austria's action.

This is the main point in the problem of the immediate causes of the war; for if Austria had not been of the opinion that no Power would defend Serbia, she would probably have relinquished her uncompromising attitude.

Below are a few official documents which will show what views were held in the different Chancelleries with regard to the probable neutrality of the Powers.

The French Ambassador at Vienna wrote on July 15, 1914:—

“In discussing the military organization of France and Russia, certain sections of the Viennese Press describe these two countries as not being in any condition to have their say in the affairs of Europe. This is a state of things which, combined with the support of Germany, gives the Dual Monarchy appreciable facilities for subjecting Serbia to whatever rule it may care to impose upon her.”

On the 25th of July the French Ambassador at Berlin voiced the same thought:—

“The Belgian Minister appears very anxious over the way matters are going. He thinks that Austria and Germany wish to take advantage of a combination of circumstances from which it seems to them that Russia and England are menaced by domestic troubles just now, while France is disputing about her military system.”

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The British Ambassador at Vienna also wrote his Government on the 26th of July :—

“In reply to my question whether Russian Government might not be compelled by public opinion to intervene on behalf of a kindred nationality, he (i.e. the German Ambassador) said that everything depended on the personality of the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs. . . . The Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs would not, his Excellency thought, be so imprudent as to take a step which would probably result in many frontier questions in which Russia is interested, such as Swedish, Polish, Ruthene, Roumanian, and Persian questions being brought into the melting-pot. France, too, was not at all in a condition for facing a war.”

Sir Edward Grey had received the same information, as he telegraphed the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg on the 27th of July :—

“We hear from German and Austrian sources that they believe Russia will take no action so long as Austria agrees not to take Serbian territory.”

The British Ambassador at Berlin wrote his Government on the 28th of July :—

“Austrian colleague said to me to-day that a general war was most unlikely, as Russia neither wanted nor was in a position to make war. I think that that opinion is shared by many people here.”

The British Ambassador at Rome wrote on the 29th of July :—

“He (i.e. the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs) added that there seemed to be a difficulty

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in making Germany believe that Russia was in earnest. As Germany, however, was really anxious for good relations with ourselves, if she believed that Great Britain would act with Russia and France he thought it would have a great effect."

The French Ambassador at Rome likewise wrote on the 29th of July :—

"The Marquis di San Giuliano told me that unfortunately the opinion of Austria and Germany with regard to this whole matter had been and still was that Russia would not go to war."

The British Ambassador at Vienna said the same thing :—

"The conviction had been expressed to me by the German Ambassador on the 24th July that Russia would stand aside."

5. Conviction of Germany and Austria that England would remain Neutral in Case of War.

As we have just seen, Austria and Germany were persuaded that neither Russia nor France would intervene in Austria's quarrel with Serbia, and of England's neutrality they were equally sure. Indeed, Germany was absolutely convinced of it, according to the telegram sent by the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg on the 25th of July :—

"His Excellency said that unfortunately Germany was convinced that she could count upon our neutrality."

The British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs

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also gave this as his opinion in another dispatch of the 27th of July :—

“ I have been told by the Russian Ambassador that in German and Austrian circles impression prevails that in any event we would stand aside.”

The same comment was made by the French Chargé d’Affaires in London, on the same date :—

“ The German and Austrian Ambassadors are allowing it to be understood that they are sure England will remain neutral in case hostilities should break out.”

England was induced to take part in the struggle only by the violation of Belgian territory ; but even when she intervened Germany was still counting upon her neutrality.

CHAPTER II

ENGLAND'S ORIGINAL ANTIPATHY TO THE WAR

1. *England's Violent Antipathy to the Thought of being Implicated in a War. She at first refuses France any Promise of Help in Case of a Conflict with Germany.*

IT is seldom that thoughtful men form hasty decisions, especially when their firm beliefs must give way to entirely contrary opinions, and psychologists will therefore study with interest the successive states of mind which in the space of a few days led the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to cast aside his violent antipathy to hostilities, and, after much hesitation, to advocate a declaration of war.

The diplomatic documents obviously give only the landmarks of this development, but one can easily guess the intermediate stages by which not only the opinion of the Foreign Secretary progressed from one phase to the other, but that of the King, Parliament, and the people as well. Prince von Bülow has reproached the Germans for their utter lack of the political, or, in other words, the psychological sense, and this must really be the case, or they would never have wounded English feeling in such a blundering way.

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Let us see what the official documents have to say.

Sir Edward Grey's ideas about going to war on Serbia's account are clearly indicated in his dispatch of the 20th of July :—

"I hated the idea of a war between any of the Great Powers, and that any of them should be dragged into a war by Serbia would be detestable."

We must not forget that, contrary to the general belief, England was not bound to France by treaty, or even by a verbal agreement ; for, in spite of all the steps taken by the French Ambassador in 1912, he had not been able to obtain anything from the British Foreign Secretary except a letter which showed plainly that England would not enter into any engagement.

The thought of a war was therefore absolutely repugnant to Sir Edward Grey, who wrote on the 23rd of July :—

"If as many as four Great Powers of Europe—let us say Austria, France, Russia, and Germany—were engaged in war, it seemed to me that it must involve the expenditure of so vast a sum of money, and such an interference with trade, that a war would be accompanied or followed by a complete collapse of European credit and industry. In these days, in great industrial States, this would mean a state of things worse than that of 1848, and, irrespective of who were victors in the war, many things might be completely swept away."

All the English representatives must have received instructions as to the reserved attitude they were expected to maintain, for the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg wrote Sir Edward Grey on

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the 24th of July, telling him of a conversation with the French Ambassador :—

“ Personally I saw no reason to expect any declaration of solidarity from His Majesty’s Government that would entail an unconditional engagement on their part to support Russia and France by force of arms. Direct British interests in Serbia were nil, and a war on behalf of that country would never be sanctioned by British public opinion.”

To this dispatch the Foreign Secretary replied on the 25th of July :—

“ I do not consider that public opinion here would or ought to sanction our going to war over a Serbian quarrel.”

And to the French Ambassador’s urgent entreaties for a promise of help, he gave the following reply on the 29th of July :—

“ In the present case the dispute between Austria and Serbia is not one in which we feel called to take a hand. Even if the question became one between Austria and Russia we should not feel called upon to take a hand in it. It would then be a question of the supremacy of Teuton or Slav—a struggle for supremacy in the Balkans ; and our idea has always been to avoid being drawn into a war over a Balkan question.”

In spite of the intervention of the President of the French Republic the British Government still refused to pledge themselves. The British Ambassador in Paris wrote on the 30th of July :—

“ President thinks that these conditions will not be accepted by Austria. He is convinced that peace between the Powers is in the hands of Great

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Britain. If His Majesty's Government announced that England would come to the aid of France in the event of a conflict between France and Germany as a result of the present differences between Austria and Serbia, there would be no war, for Germany would at once modify her attitude.

"I explained to him how difficult it would be for His Majesty's Government to make such an announcement, but he said that he must maintain that it would be in the interests of peace."

England's repugnance to the idea of a war is corroborated, if that were necessary, by the correspondence between the President of the French Republic and the King of England, and future historians will find it difficult to understand how Germany could have been led to believe that Great Britain desired a conflict. The King's courteous but elusive reply is dated the 1st of August, the day upon which Germany declared war against Russia, and the day before she sent her ultimatum to Belgium. The following is an extract from it :—

"I am personally using my best endeavours with the Emperors of Russia and of Germany towards finding some solution by which actual military operations may at any rate be postponed, and time be thus given for calm discussion between the Powers. . . .

"As to the attitude of my country, events are changing so rapidly that it is difficult to forecast future developments; but you may rest assured that my Government will continue to discuss freely and frankly any point which might arise of interest to our two nations with M. Cambon."

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2. *Efforts made by England on the Continent to Avert a Conflict.*

Sir Edward Grey was desirous of averting a war at any cost, and made the most strenuous efforts, both directly and through his Ambassadors, to put an end to the quarrel between the Great Powers. At first it seemed to him that it would be best to advise Serbia to accept the Austrian ultimatum, and he wrote on the 24th of July :—

“It is impossible to say whether military action by Austria when time limit expires can be averted by anything but unconditional acceptance of her demands, but only chance appears to lie in avoiding an absolute refusal and replying favourably to as many points as the time limit allows. . . .

“I have urged upon German Ambassador that Austria should not precipitate military action.”

All the Ambassadors made similar representations to the Powers, and especially to Germany. The British Ambassador at St. Petersburg wrote thus on the 29th of July :—

“I told the German Ambassador, who appealed to me to give moderating counsels to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, that from the beginning I had not ceased to do so, and that the German Ambassador at Vienna should now in his turn use his restraining influence. I made it clear to his Excellency that, Russia being thoroughly in earnest, a general war could not be averted if Serbia were attacked by Austria.”

The British Government's proposal for a Conference was not accepted by the interested parties,

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and on the 29th of July Sir Edward Grey announced that he was prepared to accept any suggestion whatsoever :—

“ I urged that the German Government should suggest any method by which the influence of the four Powers could be used together to prevent war between Austria and Russia. France agreed, Italy agreed.”

Even when Austria had declared war against Serbia, he did not lose all hope, but wrote on the 1st of August :—

“ I still believe that it might be possible to secure peace if only a little respite in time can be gained before any Great Power begins war.

“ The Russian Government has communicated to me the readiness of Austria to discuss with Russia and the readiness of Austria to accept a basis of mediation which is not open to the objections raised in regard to the formula which Russia originally suggested.”

It was too late !

3. *German Ideas as to England's Share in Causing the War.*

The preceding documents show in a manner which admits of no dispute how repugnant the thought of a war was to England ; but they have not made a soul in Germany believe it. Indeed, one need do no more than quote the speeches delivered before the Reichstag by the German Chancellor, with the object of demonstrating that England instigated the war, in order to prove how the affective and mystic elements paralyse the faculty of visualizing reality.

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The address which he gave at the end of August 1915 is extremely curious from this point of view, and voices opinions that are very probably shared by the German people, who believe everything that their Government tells them to. Such blindness in the Chancellor of the Empire would be inexplicable, however, were it not for the psychological reasons which I have just stated. It is useless to speak of bad faith, for he knew that history would record his speech, and he surely had no desire to distort the truth entirely; but, like all devotees, he was doubtless convinced that his assertions were perfectly accurate.

His speech consists entirely of affirmations, such as, for instance: "All the attempts of the enemy to ascribe warlike ambitions to us and a love of peace to himself have failed in the face of the published evidence. . . ." "It is clearly proved that the catastrophe of the conflagration which is now devastating the world could have been prevented if we could have concluded a genuine agreement with England to keep the peace." And as a justification for attributing warlike plans to England, he adds: "By meddling in our discussions with France on the Morocco question, England showed every one that her policy threatened the world's peace by its aims of universal domination."

If the Chancellor had not been so blind he might have said that on the latter occasion it was "The German policy which threatened the world's peace by its aims of universal domination," for, as a matter of fact, it was then and then only, that France realized how impossible it was for war to be averted.

CHAPTER III

DEVELOPMENT OF FEELING IN ENGLAND

1. *Change of Feeling in the British Government*

WE have just seen how energetically the British Government protested against the idea of being drawn into a conflict on Serbia's account, and how tenaciously they intervened in the interests of European peace. We shall now endeavour to discover the causes which in one short week inclined peace-loving England to thoughts of war.

This transformation was brought about by a psychological error on the part of Germany, who, persuaded by her diplomats that England was struggling with the most serious difficulties in Ireland, and would not wish for a war from which no great advantage could be derived in any case, thought that it was practicable to violate the neutrality of Belgium in order to reach Paris more quickly. This lack of discernment gained her a formidable enemy.

As the starting-point for the development of English opinion we may take Sir Edward Grey's hesitant dispatch of the 31st of July:—

“We cannot undertake a definite pledge to intervene in a war. I have so told the French

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Ambassador, who has urged His Majesty's Government to reconsider this decision.

"I have told him that we should not be justified in giving any pledge at the present moment, but that we will certainly consider the situation again directly there is a new development."

The French Ambassador then attempted to show the influence which England's decision would have on that of Germany, and the Foreign Secretary became a little more definite, but still refused to give any pledge, as he wrote on the 31st of July:—

"M. Cambon¹ referred to-day to a telegram that had been shown to Sir Arthur Nicholson² this morning from the French Ambassador in Berlin, saying that it was the uncertainty with regard to whether we would intervene which was the encouraging element in Berlin, and that, if we would only declare definitely on the side of Russia and France, it would decide the German attitude in favour of peace. . . .

"I said (to M. Cambon) that we had come to the conclusion, in the Cabinet to-day, that we could not give any pledge at the present time. Though we should have to put our policy before Parliament, we could not pledge Parliament in advance. Up to the present moment, we did not feel, and public opinion did not feel, that any treaties or obligations of this country were involved. Further developments might alter this situation and cause the Government and Parliament to take the view that intervention was justified. The preservation

¹ French Ambassador in London.

² British Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

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of the neutrality of Belgium might be, I would not say a decisive, but an important factor, in determining our attitude. . . .

" M. Cambon repeated his question whether we would help France if Germany made an attack on her.

" I said I could only adhere to the answer that, as far as things had gone at present, we could not take any engagement."

The German Ambassador having refused to give any assurances with regard to the neutrality of Belgium, Sir Edward Grey wrote on the 1st of August :—

" I told the German Ambassador to-day that the reply of the German Government with regard to the neutrality of Belgium was a matter of very great regret, because the neutrality of Belgium affected feeling in this country. If Germany could see her way to give the same assurance as that which had been given by France it would materially contribute to relieve anxiety and tension here. On the other hand, if there were a violation of the neutrality of Belgium by one combatant while the other respected it, it would be extremely difficult to restrain public feeling in this country."

The Foreign Secretary was obviously beginning to waver, and his peace-at-any-price feeling was undergoing a change. In a dispatch of the 2nd of August, the French Ambassador in London was in a position to tell his Government :—

" At the close of the Cabinet meeting this morning, Sir Edward Grey gave me the following memorandum :—

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“ ‘ I am authorized to give an assurance that, if the German fleet comes into the Channel or through the North Sea to undertake hostile operations against French coasts or shipping, the British fleet will give all the protection in its power.

“ ‘ This assurance is, of course, subject to the policy of His Majesty’s Government receiving the support of Parliament, and must not be taken as binding His Majesty’s Government to take any action until the above contingency of action by the German fleet takes place.’ ”

This was only a beginning, however, for it was not a declaration of war against Germany by England, but a promise that French shipping should have the protection of the British fleet. If England had gone no farther than this, Germany would simply have refrained from attacking the French coasts and shipping, so as not to expose herself to British reprisals. But the Foreign Secretary’s feeling was undergoing a continuous change, and on the 4th of August the British Minister at Brussels wrote the Belgian Government, by instruction :—

“ I am directed to inform the Belgian Government that if pressure is applied to them by Germany to induce them to depart from neutrality, His Majesty’s Government expect that they will resist by any means in their power, and that His Majesty’s Government will support them in offering such resistance, and that His Majesty’s Government in this event are prepared to join Russia and France, if desired, in offering to the Belgian Government at once common action for the purpose of resisting use of force by Germany against them, and a

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guarantee to maintain their independence and integrity in future years."

The die was cast ; England could not draw back after this ; and on the 4th of August the French Ambassador in London had the long-desired satisfaction of telegraphing his Government :—

" Sir Edward Grey has just sent for me to say that the Prime Minister would announce in the House of Commons to-day that Germany had been requested to withdraw her ultimatum to Belgium and to reply to England this evening before midnight."

Germany, who was convinced of England's neutrality, was thrown into consternation at this decision, for her soldiers had already invaded Belgium and it was almost impossible to retrace her steps. The German Chancellor's lamentations and embarrassment are accurately depicted in the report of the British Ambassador at Berlin :—

" I found the Chancellor very agitated. His Excellency at once began a harangue, which lasted for about twenty minutes. He said that the step taken by His Majesty's Government was terrible to a degree ; just for a word—' neutrality,' a word which in war-time had so often been disregarded—just for a scrap of paper Great Britain was going to make war on a kindred nation who desired nothing better than to be friends with her. All his efforts in that direction had been rendered useless by this last terrible step, and the policy to which, as I knew, he had devoted himself since his accession to office had tumbled down like a house of cards. What we had done was unthinkable ;

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it was like striking a man from behind while he was fighting for his life against two assailants. He held Great Britain responsible for all the terrible events that might happen. I protested strongly against that statement, and said that, in the same way as he and Herr von Jagow¹ wished me to understand that for strategical reasons it was a matter of life and death to Germany to advance through Belgium and violate the latter's neutrality, so I would wish him to understand that it was, so to speak, a matter of 'life and death' for the honour of Great Britain that she should keep her solemn engagement to do her utmost to defend Belgium's neutrality if attacked. That solemn compact simply had to be kept, or what confidence could any one have in engagements given by Great Britain in the future? . . . As I was leaving he said that the blow of Great Britain joining Germany's enemies was all the greater that almost up to the last moment he and his Government had been working with us and supporting our efforts to maintain peace between Austria and Russia. I said that this was part of the tragedy which saw the two nations fall apart just at the moment when the relations between them had been more friendly and cordial than they had been for years."

The different conceptions of right which sunder the Germans so completely from the English are fully revealed in this dramatic dispatch, of which I have given but a fragment. The two speakers could not understand one another at all, for "the scrap of paper," whose importance was enormous to one of them, had no meaning at all for the other.

¹ German Secretary of State.

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2. Change of Public Opinion in England at the Outbreak of the War.

We have just seen how the pacific attitude of the British Foreign Secretary was transformed within a few days. The new point of view was, of course, accepted by the King and by Parliament, without whose consent war could not have been declared.

Events had caused the Foreign Secretary to change his mind quickly ; but what was going to be the behaviour of the population, given its love of peace and its unfamiliarity with diplomatic conferences? This was an extremely important point, for public opinion is all-powerful in England, and public opinion had to be won. Cabinet Ministers set themselves to work by a series of public speeches, and the Press bravely seconded their efforts.

It might well have seemed a difficult task to persuade the nation into taking part in a European war on account of a small and insignificant Balkan State, whose very name was scarcely known to it, and to have imposed such a thing upon it without explanation would have been an impossibility. In any case, it was an undertaking that required a profound knowledge of the British mind if it were to succeed at all.

The British Government accomplished this aim, not by speaking to the people of their material interests, but by reminding them of their national dignity and honour—that is to say, of the respect which must be observed by a great nation for the obligations which it has contracted.

Ever since the fourteenth century England's

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policy with regard to the Netherlands had been limited to upholding these small and friendly States which lay between the British Isles and the Great Powers of Central Europe. In carrying out this policy she had signed a treaty guaranteeing the neutrality of Belgium. "If we had permitted it to be violated," said Mr. Lloyd George, "our shame would have rung down the everlasting ages."

I cannot give anything more than a few short extracts from the speeches which were delivered on this subject by members of the British Cabinet in many public meetings.

On September 4, 1914, Mr. Asquith said:—

"Let me ask you, and through you the world outside, what would have been our condition as a nation to-day if we had been base enough, through timidity, or through a perverted calculation of self-interest, or through a paralysis of the sense of honour and duty—if we had been base enough to be false to our word and faithless to our friends?

"What account should we, the Government and the people of this country, have been able to render to the tribunal of our national conscience and sense of honour, if, in defiance of our plighted and solemn obligations, we had endured, if we had not done our best to prevent—yes, and to avenge—these intolerable outrages?

"For my part I say that sooner than be a silent witness, which means in effect a willing accomplice, of this tragic triumph of force over law, and of brutality over freedom, I would see this country of ours blotted out of the page of history."

The following are some extracts from a speech

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delivered by Mr. Lloyd George on September 19, 1914:—

“There is no man in this room who has always regarded the prospect of engaging in a great war with greater reluctance, with greater repugnance, than I have done throughout the whole of my political life. There is no man, either inside or outside this hall, more convinced than I that we could not have avoided it without national dishonour. . . .

“National honour is a reality, and any nation that disregards it is doomed. In the first place, we are bound by honourable obligations to defend the independence, liberty, and integrity of a small neighbour, who has lived peaceably. She could not have compelled us. She was weak.”

Then, referring to the treaty which Prussia had signed, and which she had just broken for mere self-interest, he showed that the life of nations depends upon their respect for “scraps of paper.”

“Such scraps of paper as bills of exchange move great ships laden with thousands of tons of precious cargo from one end of the world to the other.

“What is the motive power behind them? The honour of commercial men. Treaties are the currency of international statesmanship.”

It is precisely in the different understanding which the Germans and English have of honour that the divergence between their points of view consists, for, as Mr. Lloyd George says:—

“The Germans can understand vengeance, they can understand your fighting for mastery, they can understand your fighting for greed of territory. But they cannot understand a great Empire pledging

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its resources, its might, the lives of its children, its very existence, to protect a little nation that seeks for its defence."

3. Influence of the Violation and Devastation of Belgium upon Public Opinion and upon the Enlistment of Volunteers in England.

Rational argumentation has little effect upon the crowd, which, however, is always impressed by sentimental or mystic pleas. The fact that English public opinion became absolutely unanimous in favour of war was not altogether because Belgium had been violated, but because her cities had been savagely laid waste, her monuments burned, and her inhabitants massacred, and because the invasion of her territory had been carried out with a perfidy which profoundly shocked the English temperament.

On the very morning of the day when Germany was preparing to violate her pledges, the Minister who represented her at Brussels was still protesting the respect of his Government for the neutrality of Belgium. On the 2nd of August the Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs met the German Minister to Brussels, and the latter told him that:—

"Up to now he had not been instructed to make us any official communication, but that we knew his personal opinion with regard to the confidence which we had every right to feel towards our eastern neighbours.

"I replied at once that everything we knew of their intentions, which had been shown in many previous conversations, did not permit us to doubt

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the perfect correctness of their attitude towards Belgium ; but nevertheless I felt bound to add that we should attach the greatest value to the possession of a formal statement of which the nation would learn with delight and gratitude."

That very day, at seven o'clock in the evening, the same German Minister handed Belgium an ultimatum demanding that the German forces should be allowed free passage through Belgian territory.

After deeds of such deep perfidy it is easy to understand that diplomats regard one another's words with the greatest suspicion, and we may well be thankful that private individuals are a little more upright in their mutual relations. We shall soon see that this extreme suspicion of the various Governments with regard to one another's pledges was one of the most active causes of the war.

We know how savagely Germany laid Belgium waste and how pitilessly she massacred the inhabitants of that country.¹

¹ The exodus of the unfortunate Belgians, fleeing from their ravaged country, has roused all the neutral countries against Germany, including even those, like Switzerland, which were at first attached to her. They have been received with the deepest sympathy everywhere. The *Journal de Genève* says on this subject: "An admirable and touching impulse of charity has taken possession of the population of Geneva at the tale of the atrocities and devastation which have been perpetrated by the Germans in Belgium, and which are unexampled in history. Every day for the last week there have been arriving unfortunate Flemings and Walloons, whose homes have been burnt, sacked, and pillaged. Every one hastens to give them shelter and to adopt—one a child, another an old man, or a poor woman, who know nothing of those whom they have been forced to leave behind, or whom they have lost in the disordered confusion of their headlong flight. There is frightful wretchedness among them, and inconceivable anguish calling for relief."

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Her object was to terrify the population and prevent resistance, in accordance with the principles laid down by the German General Staff; but here again she committed one of those psychological errors of which she has been so lavish. Germany was out in her reckoning, for she did not crush resistance, and the only result of all this violence was to excite the wrath of England and raise up a host of five million British volunteers who were under no obligation to enlist.

It will be recalled what a wretched explanation the Imperial Chancellor gave the Reichstag of the violation of Belgium, by appealing to the theory which is held by the German historians and which I have set forth in another chapter, that a State need not take any account of treaties which embarrass it.

“Necessity knows no law.”

CHAPTER IV

THE RESPECTIVE PARTS PLAYED BY GERMANY, AUSTRIA, RUSSIA, AND FRANCE WHILE THE DIPLOMATIC CONVERSATIONS WERE PRO- CEEDING

1. *Attempts on the Part of Russia and France to Avert War*

FRANCE was not at all prepared for war, nor, indeed, was Russia, who was endeavouring to extend her inadequate railway system, but whose improvements to this end were still on paper. Consequently neither of these countries could possibly wish for a conflict; and I must repeat that it was the very conviction that they would not engage in hostilities which made Austria take such a stubborn stand.

This uncompromising attitude on Austria's part placed Russia in a very embarrassing position at the start. Some years previously, she had allowed Austria to seize Bosnia in order to avert a war, and if she were now to permit the Dual Monarchy to crush the Slavs of Serbia, she would run the risk of losing all her prestige in the Balkans. Nevertheless she accepted concession after concession, until Germany finally sent her a mandate to which she could not submit.

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From the time negotiations began Russia's attitude was most conciliatory, as the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg wrote on the 25th of July :—

If Serbia should appeal to the Powers, Russia would be quite ready to stand aside and leave the question in the hands of England, France, Germany, and Italy. It was possible, in his opinion, that Serbia might propose to submit the question to arbitration."

The same Ambassador seems to have had a very clear and even prophetic view of the question, for he added :—

"Austria's action was in reality directed against Russia. She aimed at overthrowing the present *status quo* in the Balkans, and establishing her own hegemony there. M. Sazonoff did not believe that Germany really wanted war, but her attitude was decided by ours. If we took our stand firmly, with France and Russia there would be no war. If we failed them now, rivers of blood would flow, and we would in the end be dragged into war."

Mark the accuracy of these last lines. By refusing a definite pledge of material support England allowed Germany to believe that she would remain neutral, and it may well be asked whether her attitude did not help to bring about the war. A clear explanation of Russia's intentions is given in another passage of the same dispatch :—

"His Excellency replied that Russia could not allow Austria to crush Serbia and become the predominant Power in the Balkans, and if she feels secure of the support of France, she will face all

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the risks of war. M. Sazonoff assured me once more that he did not wish to precipitate a conflict, but that unless Germany could restrain Austria I could regard the situation as desperate."

Russia did not continue to use such positive language, however, but soon returned to a course of the most propitiatory concessions, and on the 25th of July the French Ambassador at St. Petersburg telegraphed his Government :—

"A Council of Ministers will be held to-morrow under the presidency of the Emperor. M. Sazonoff shows the greatest moderation.

"‘We must avoid,’ he told me, ‘everything that might precipitate a crisis, and I believe that even if the Austrian Government should take action against Serbia, we ought not to break off negotiations.’"

Russia's complaisant intentions are again emphasized in a dispatch from the French Ambassador at Rome, dated the 26th of July :—

"M. Sazonoff told the Italian Ambassador at St. Petersburg yesterday that Russia was employing all diplomatic means to avert a conflict and that she had not given up hope that Austria might be induced by mediation to adopt a less uncompromising attitude ; but that she could not be asked to allow Serbia to be crushed."

The same conciliatory disposition is shown once more in the following dispatch from the French Ambassador at St. Petersburg, on the 26th of July :—

"The Minister for Foreign Affairs is still persevering in his praiseworthy endeavours to obtain

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a pacific solution. 'To the last moment,' he told me, 'I shall be ready to negotiate.'"

The Russian Government were extremely anxious to avert a war and showed their willingness to consider any sort of compromise, as the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs wrote on the 27th of July:—

"If direct explanations with the Vienna Cabinet were to prove impossible, I am ready to accept the British proposal, or any other proposal of a kind that would bring about a favourable solution of the conflict."

Austria was, unfortunately, convinced by these very concessions that Russia would remain neutral, and accordingly thought that she was running no risk in declaring war against Serbia; but to this decision on Austria's part Russia replied by a partial mobilization, which she communicated to her Ambassador at Berlin on the 28th of July:—

"In consequence of the declaration of war by Austria against Serbia, the Imperial Government will announce to-morrow (29th) the mobilization in the military circonscriptions of Odessa, Kieff, Moscow, and Kazan. Please inform German Government, confirming the absence in Russia of any aggressive intention against Germany."

Even then Russia did not abandon all hope of peace, as the Minister for Foreign Affairs telegraphed on the same date:—

"The Austrian declaration of war clearly puts an end to the idea of direct communications between Austria and Russia. Action by London Cabinet in order to set on foot mediation with a

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view to suspension of military operations of Austria against Serbia is now most urgent.

"Unless military operations are stopped, mediation would only allow matters to drag on and give Austria time to crush Serbia."

Under instruction the Russian Ambassador at Vienna approached the Austrian Government again, but was unsuccessful, according to his dispatch of the 28th of July :—

". . . The Austro-Hungarian Government, who had only decided, much against their will, on the energetic measures which they had taken against Serbia, could no longer recede, nor enter into any discussion about the terms of the Austro-Hungarian note.

"Count Berchtold¹ added that the crisis had become so acute, and that public opinion had risen to such a pitch of excitement, that the Government, even if they wished it, could no longer consent to such a course. This was all the more impossible, he said, inasmuch as the Serbian reply itself furnished proof of the insincerity of Serbia's promises for the future."

Even with this the Russian Government would not relinquish all hope, and on the 29th the French Ambassador at St. Petersburg telegraphed to Paris :—

"I am now in a position to assure your Excellency that the Russian Government will acquiesce in any steps that may be proposed to them by France and England with a view to maintaining peace. My English colleague is telegraphing the same assurance to London."

¹ Austro-Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

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The Vienna Cabinet, unfortunately, grew less and less conciliatory, and the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, seeing that the situation was momentarily becoming worse, staked his last throw on the intervention of England and telegraphed his Ambassador at London, on the 29th :—

“From now on, nothing remains for us to do but to rely entirely on the British Government to take the initiative in any steps which they may consider advisable.”

Germany, who had been so hesitant at first, now seemed to have decided upon war, and the French Ambassador telegraphed his Government on the 30th of July :—

“In an interview which he had this afternoon with Count Pourtalès, M. Sazonoff was convinced that Germany will not give Vienna the decisive word which would maintain peace. The Emperor Nicholas has the same impression, in consequence of an interchange of telegrams which he has had personally with the Emperor William. On the other hand, the Russian General Staff and Admiralty have received disturbing news with regard to the preparations of the German army and navy.

“Besides giving me this information, M. Sazonoff added that the Russian Government would none the less continue their conciliatory efforts. He again said to me: ‘I shall negotiate to the last moment.’”

The Czar made similar efforts, as may be seen from the following conversation with the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs telegraphed by the French Ambassador on the 30th of July :—

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"The Emperor Nicholas is so anxious to avert war that I am going to make you a fresh proposition in his name: 'If Austria, recognizing that her conflict with Serbia has assumed character of question of European interest, declares herself ready to eliminate from her ultimatum points which violate principle of sovereignty of Serbia, Russia engages to stop all military preparations.'"

Unfortunately it was too late, Austria did not yield, and on the 31st of July the British Ambassador telegraphed his Government:—

"It has been decided to issue orders for general mobilization.

"This decision was taken in consequence of report received from Russian Ambassador in Vienna to the effect that Austria is determined not to yield to intervention of Powers, and that she is moving troops against Russia as well as against Serbia.

"Russia has also reason to believe that Germany is making active military preparations, and she cannot afford to let her get a start."

Not "to let her get a start." We must keep in mind the feeling of suspicion which these words betray, for it was destined to make the war inevitable.

M. Sazonoff, the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, was finally obliged to relinquish all hope of peace, and expressed his helplessness in a conversation which the French Ambassador telegraphed to Paris on the 1st of August:—

"M. Sazonoff said that he was completely weary of the ceaseless endeavours he had made to avoid a

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war. No suggestion held out to him had been refused. He had accepted the proposal for a conference of four, for mediation by Great Britain and Italy, for direct conversation between Austria and Russia ; but Germany and Austria-Hungary had either rendered these attempts for peace ineffective by evasive replies, or had refused them altogether."

Of course it may be urged that Russia could have averted the war if she had made no attempt to interfere between Austria and Serbia. She had already tolerated the Austrian conquest of Bosnia, why could she not accept that of Serbia too? Obviously we have here to do with questions of sentiment and prestige, which no one is competent to discuss unless he partakes of them. But we may well believe that an Austrian conquest of Serbia would have been extremely detrimental to the interests of Russia, since she allowed Europe to become involved in a terrible war in order that it might be prevented. Her point of view is, furthermore, plainly indicated in the following remark, telegraphed to his Government by the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg on the 1st of August :—

"It was clear that Austrian domination of Serbia was as intolerable for Russia as the dependence of the Netherlands on Germany would be to Great Britain."

2. Germany's Desire to Localize the Conflict. Until the Last Moment she Hesitates to Provoke a General War.

It is sometimes a very difficult matter to diagnose the real causes of human actions with absolute

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certainty, for even those who perform them do not always know why they do so, and hence one must often be satisfied with mere probabilities.

From the documents which have been published up to the present time it seems that Germany did not actually want war, but decided upon it only at the last moment for the reasons which we shall endeavour to explain in another chapter. Her apparent unwillingness to exert a moderating influence upon Austria's uncompromising attitude was doubtless due to her certainty that the Powers of the Triple Entente would not intervene, and that their inactivity would give her a fresh opportunity of humiliating Russia at no risk to herself, as had happened once before when she facilitated Austria's conquest of Bosnia. As soon as this design on the part of Germany is grasped one has no difficulty in understanding why she instructed her Ambassadors to urge upon the Great Powers the localization of the conflict between Austria and Serbia.

The British Chargé d'Affaires at Berlin wrote on the 22nd of July :—

“ Last night I met Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. . . . He insisted that question at issue was one for settlement between Serbia and Austria alone, and that there should be no interference from outside in the discussions between those two countries.”

The same interpretation was given at Paris, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs writing on the 24th of July :—

“ The German Ambassador called my attention

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particularly to the last two paragraphs of his note, urging me to observe, before he read them, that they contained the main point of the whole. I wrote the passage down word for word, as follows :—

“ ‘ The Imperial Government want to emphasize their opinion that in the present case there is only question of a matter to be settled exclusively between Austria-Hungary and Serbia, and that the Great Powers ought seriously to endeavour to reserve it to those two immediately concerned.

“ ‘ The Imperial Government desire urgently the localization of the conflict, because every interference of another Power would, owing to the different treaty obligations, be followed by incalculable consequences.’ ”

At that time the German Government seemed really anxious for the localization of the conflict, and the British Chargé d’Affaires at Berlin wrote the following report of a conversation with the German Secretary of State :—

“ He said that he had given the Russian Government to understand that the last thing Germany wanted was a general war, and he would do all in his power to prevent such a calamity. If the relations between Austria and Russia became threatening, he was quite ready to fall in with your suggestion as to the four Powers working in favour of moderation at Vienna and St. Petersburg.”

Germany seemed very desirous that Russia should not intervene, as is indicated by the French Minister for Foreign Affairs in the following dispatch sent to his Ambassadors on the 27th of July :—

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"This afternoon the German Ambassador came to make me a communication with a view to inducing France to intervene with Russia in favour of peace. He told me that Austria had informed Russia that she had no wish to seek territorial aggrandizement nor to injure the integrity of the Kingdom of Serbia. Her sole aim is to secure her own tranquillity and to maintain order.

"It depends on Russia whether war will be averted; Germany is at one with France in her ardent desire that peace may be maintained and in the steadfast hope that France will use her influence to allay irritation at St. Petersburg."

The same step was taken in London. Sir Edward Grey wrote on the 27th of July:—

"German Ambassador has informed me that German Government accept in principle mediation between Austria and Russia by the four Powers, reserving, of course, their right as an ally to help Austria if attacked. He has also been instructed to request me to use influence in St. Petersburg to localize the war and to keep up the peace of Europe."

But even while Germany was asking France and England to intervene with Russia, she still took the view that Austria's difficulties with Serbia could not be submitted to a sort of foreign court, as the British Ambassador at Berlin telegraphed on the 27th of July:—

"Secretary of State says that conference you suggest would practically amount to a court of arbitration and could not, in his opinion, be called together except at the request of Austria and Russia.

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He could not therefore fall in with your suggestion, desirous though he was to co-operate for the maintenance of peace."

In any case Austria was very disinclined to be influenced by outsiders. The British Ambassador at Vienna telegraphed on the 28th of July :—

" Minister for Foreign Affairs said quietly, but firmly, that no discussion could be accepted on basis of Serbian note ; that war would be declared to-day, and that well-known pacific character of Emperor, as well as, he might add, his own, might be accepted as a guarantee that war was both just and inevitable. This was a matter that must be settled directly between the two parties immediately concerned."

In spite of this the German Government still seemed desirous of maintaining peace, as the British Ambassador at Berlin telegraphed on the 28th of July :—

" At invitation of Imperial Chancellor, I called upon His Excellency this evening. He said that he wished me to tell you that he was most anxious that Germany should work together with England for maintenance of general peace, as they had done successfully in the last European crisis. He had not been able to accept your proposal for a conference of representatives of the Great Powers, because he did not think that it would be effective, and because such a conference would in his opinion have had appearance of an ' Areopagus ' consisting of two Powers of each group sitting upon the two remaining Powers ; but his inability to accept the proposed conference must not be regarded as

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militating against his strong desire for effective co-operation. You could be assured that he was doing his very best, both at Vienna and St. Petersburg, to get the two Governments to discuss the situation directly with each other and in a friendly way."

Unfortunately these good intentions did not last long. Germany's terrible decision was about to be taken, for the French Ambassador at St. Petersburg telegraphed on the 29th :—

"The German Ambassador told M. Sazonoff that if Russia did not cease her military preparations the German army would be ordered to mobilize. M. Sazonoff replied that the Russian preparations were occasioned on the one hand by the obstinate and uncompromising attitude of Austria, and on the other hand by the fact that eight Austro-Hungarian army corps are mobilized already.

"The manner in which Count Pourtalès delivered this message decided the Russian Government to order the thirteen army corps intended to operate against Austria to be mobilized to-night."

Nevertheless, Germany still hesitated. The British Ambassador at Vienna wrote on the 30th of July :—

"The French Ambassador hears from Berlin that the German Ambassador at Vienna is instructed to speak seriously to the Austro-Hungarian Government against acting in a manner calculated to provoke a European war.

"Unfortunately the German Ambassador is himself so identified with extreme anti-Russian and anti-Serbian feeling prevalent in Vienna that he is

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unlikely to plead the cause of peace with entire sincerity."

Of the efforts which Germany is supposed to have exerted in Austria's direction there are small traces to be found in the diplomatic correspondence, and only after a year of warfare, in August 1915, did the Chancellor give the following information to the Reichstag:—

"I telegraphed to Herr von Tschirscky at Vienna: 'We cannot require Austria to negotiate with Serbia, with whom she is in a state of war; but an entire refusal to exchange views with Petrograd would be a serious mistake. We are of course ready to fulfil our duties as allies, but we must refuse to allow ourselves to be drawn into a general conflict by Austria-Hungary's neglect of our advice.'"

". . . The war was made inevitable by nothing but the Russian mobilization."

These explanations were very slow to appear, and no doubt contain only a few fragments of truth, for, as has been justly said: "If Governments spoke the truth and nothing but the truth, there would be no more diplomacy and perhaps no more war."

Was it the object of all Germany's statements during the diplomatic conversations merely to gain time? The following dispatch sent from St. Petersburg on the 30th of July by the British Ambassador seems to show plainly that the German Ambassador did not think so:—

"German Ambassador had a second interview with Minister for Foreign Affairs at 2 a.m., when former completely broke down on seeing that war

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was inevitable. He appealed to M. Sazonoff to make some suggestion which he could telegraph to German Government as a last hope. M. Sazonoff accordingly drew up and handed to German Ambassador the following formula :—

“ ‘ If Austria, recognizing that her conflict with Serbia has assumed character of question of European interest, declares herself ready to eliminate from her ultimatum points which violate principle of sovereignty of Serbia, Russia engages to stop all military preparations.’ ”

Events, however, were hurrying on more rapidly than the desires of diplomats, the German mobilization had just been announced in the newspapers, and yet one is forced to believe that Germany still hesitated, if one considers the dispatch sent on the 30th of July by the French Ambassador at Berlin :—

“ It seems certain that the extraordinary council which was held last evening at Potsdam with the military authorities, and under the presidency of the Emperor, had decided upon mobilization, a fact which explains the printing of the *Lokal Anzeiger's* special edition ; but that various influences (England's statement that she reserves full liberty of action, exchange of telegrams between the Czar and William II), have caused the serious measures which had been determined upon to be suspended.”

They were not long held in abeyance, for the fatal hour had struck, and on the 2nd of August the French Ambassador at St. Petersburg telegraphed the French Government :—

“ The German Ambassador handed M. Sazonoff

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his Government's declaration of war at 7.10 p.m. yesterday. He leaves St. Petersburg to-day."

On the 3rd of August the German Ambassador gave the French Minister for Foreign Affairs the following statement:—

"The German civil and military authorities have ascertained that a certain number of openly hostile acts have been committed by French military aviators on German territory. Under instruction, I have the honour to inform Your Excellency that in view of these aggressions the German Empire considers itself in a state of war with France by the fault of the latter Power."

These were of course entirely fictitious pretexts ; but France had to be conquered before Russia was ready, and it was necessary to declare war against her without delay.

CHAPTER V

INFLUENCE OF POPULAR FEELING UPON THE GENESIS OF THE WAR

1. Importance of Public Opinion

IN modern times public opinion is a force which even monarchs cannot resist. It comes slowly into being and prepares the unconscious will, which usually precedes the conscious will of those who are in authority.

Public opinion cannot be said to have taken a conspicuous part in the genesis of the present war ; but its influence was nevertheless a very real one, for it was greatly considered by the diplomats of all the various countries, especially by the Austrians, and was created outright by the Government in peace-loving England, whose interest in Serbia was of the slightest.

I have already called attention to the fact that one of the fundamental bases of politics is to create feeling, and subsequently to propagate it in such a way that it becomes collective. The Germans hate their enemies so savagely at the present time simply because their rulers have succeeded in persuading them that England and Russia plotted secretly against them and then attacked them in a perfidious manner. There is not, perhaps, one

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German out of the whole seventy millions who does not share this conviction, and at least fifty years, or the time necessary for the present generation to disappear, will doubtless have to elapse before the truth about this matter can be established.

To create a collective prejudice among the German people against England and France required individual volitions not only powerful in themselves, but possessed of large facilities for carrying on a propaganda, and, as a matter of fact, it was necessary for many years to have the prolonged co-operation of the Press, patriotic societies, books, and universities in order to secure the desired result. Newspapers are always potent leaders, because their ready weapons are affirmation, repetition, suggestion, and prestige, which are the real affective factors of crowd-opinion.

The Imperial Government, too, although its attitude was strictly pacific, countenanced the movement, which furnished it with many a pretext for working upon the Reichstag's fears, and thus obtaining the taxation necessary for the growing army. Its aim was to make the latter as redoubtable as possible, so that none of the Great Powers should dare to oppose it, and Germany should thus be able to force her hegemony upon Europe without the necessity of going to war. It was a dangerous way to argue, for, as experience has shown, collective opinion may very quickly become a force so mighty that those who have created it can no longer control it.

Perhaps the greatest influence in the formation of public opinion was exerted by the Press, which

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was subsidized by the Government and the great armament factories, and which published articles assuring the public that the French were about to attack Germany and avenge themselves upon her, whenever the Government wanted to raise new taxes for the increase of the army or navy.

Public opinion is more powerful than the will of kings, though this is not always realized, and no one is strong enough to oppose it when it has expressed itself distinctly.

At the beginning of the war the Germans apparently paid little attention to the feelings of neutrals, but when their devastation of Belgium roused public opinion throughout the world and turned it against them, they began to fear its power, and tried to win it over by buying or establishing newspapers in Spain, Italy, Turkey, America, and most of the other countries. This design was carried out with the perseverance and method which the Teutons apply to all their undertakings; but their complete lack of psychology and their inability to understand the feelings of others caused them to indulge in such exaggerated statements that readers lost all confidence in them.

2. The War Parties in Germany.

The Germans have never liked the French, of whom their envy is indeed an old and historic one, and their antipathy has recently been increased by various circumstances, especially by the Morocco troubles, which were skilfully exploited by the German Press, and which were of the greatest

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assistance in inflaming public opinion against France.

The Teutonic state of mind is well indicated by the following document published in the *Yellow Book* :—

“ We discover every day how deep and how lasting are the sentiments of wounded pride and of rancour against us, provoked by the events of last year. The treaty of November 4, 1911, is a profound disappointment.

“ The resentment felt in every part of the country is the same. All Germans, even the Socialists, resent our having taken their share in Morocco.

“ It appeared, a year or two ago, as if the Germans were setting out to conquer the world. They deemed themselves so strong that they thought no one would dare to enter the lists against them. Boundless possibilities were opened up for German industry, German trade, and German expansion. . . .

“ They look upon us, with our 40,000,000 inhabitants, as a secondary nation.”

The War Party had a large following, but just as many people wanted peace, according to another document also published by the *Yellow Book* :—

“ With regard to the contingency of a war in the near future German public opinion is divided into two currents.

“ The country contains forces which make for peace ; but they are not organized and have no popular leaders. They consider that war would be a social misfortune for Germany, and would chiefly benefit England.

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"The partisans of war are divided into several categories, the members of which draw, each from his caste, class, intellectual and moral make-up, private interests and rancours, the special arguments which are forming a general body of opinion, and are adding to the strength and rapidity of the belligerent current.

"Some persons desire war because they think that existing circumstances make it inevitable, and that it will be better for Germany to have it sooner rather than later.

"Others consider it necessary for economic reasons found in over-population, over-production, and the need of markets and outlets for trade, or for social reasons, such as that a diversion abroad alone can prevent or delay the rising to power of the democratic and Socialist masses.

"Others, again, who have not much confidence in the future of the Empire, and who believe that time works for France, think that the event should be precipitated.

"Still others are bellicose by 'Bismarckism,' if one may use the expression. They feel humiliated at having to discuss matters with the French, to speak of right and reason in negotiations or conferences where they have not always easily prevailed, when they have the more decisive force on their side.

"Yet others want war because they have a mystic hatred of Revolutionary France.

"And lastly, the gun and armour-plate manufacturers, the great merchants who clamour for more extensive markets, and the bankers who speculate

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on the Golden Age and a future war indemnity, think that war would be good business.

"Except for a few eminent minds, the universities have developed a warlike ideology, and the economists prove by force of statistics that Germany needs a colonial and commercial Empire commensurate with her industrial output.

"Historians, philosophers, political publicists, and other apologists of *Deutsche Kultur*, desire to force a specifically German type of thought and feeling upon the world, and to overcome the intellectual supremacy which lucid intellects think belongs to France.

"The minds of the people are growing accustomed to the idea that the coming war will be a duel between France and Germany."

All the information contained in the above report seems very accurate ; but I cannot admit that "the minds of the people are growing accustomed to the idea that the coming war will be a duel between France and Germany," for, as a matter of fact, England confronted Germany as an enemy far more hated and feared than France, and it was obviously to Germany's interest to make war upon her one day, while, on the contrary, she had no object in fighting France. People ruin their competitors, but they treat their customers with deference, and both France and Russia were being more and more penetrated by Germany's commercial invasion, and had become her best customers and an increasing source of wealth for her manufacturers and merchants.

If a war with France had really been to the

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interest of the German Government, many an excellent opportunity might have been seized as a pretext to that end, especially at the time when Russia was left entirely defenceless by the revolution which followed her Japanese defeats.

The only rival feared by the Germans was England, whose competition impeded their efforts in every quarter of the globe, and day by day their hatred of this powerful adversary increased ; but feeling that they were weaker than she, they held their peace. They were, however, displaying a feverish activity in building a fleet which should be strong enough to oppose the formidable one of Great Britain, for the German desire to dominate the principal trade-routes of the world could be fulfilled only by seizing Antwerp, and to do this England would have to be conquered first.

But the German fleet, for which this destiny was reserved, was not yet completed when war was declared, all too soon for Germany's interests, and therefore there is no reason to believe that she desired hostilities at the time when various circumstances caused their outbreak.

3. Feeling in the various Belligerent Countries during the Diplomatic Conversations and at the Time of the Declaration of War.

France and England looked upon the menace of war and its subsequent declaration as an inevitable evil which they must endure ; but a reference to the diplomatic dispatches will show that this was not the case in some of the other countries, especially

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in those which were more or less really concerned in the matter.

The prospect of hostilities appears to have been regarded with favour by Germany, or at least by the Press, as the French Representative in Bavaria wrote on the 10th of July :—

“ At the present time the Imperial Government would be supported by public opinion in any energetic policy, even though it should involve the risk of a conflict, for the state of war to which the popular mind has been accustomed for the past two years by the events which have taken place in the Near East no longer seems a remote catastrophe, but a solution of political and economic difficulties which are constantly growing more serious.”

From information received, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs telegraphed the Ambassadors on the 26th of July :—

“ A veritable explosion of chauvinism has broken out in Berlin. The Emperor has come straight back from Kiel, and M. Jules Cambon thinks that Germany will reply immediately to the first military measures taken by Russia, and will probably not wait for even a pretext to attack us.”

This is, of course, precisely what happened, but nevertheless the declaration of war appears to have produced an explosion of rage rather than joy, for, as I learn personally from M. Cambon, the French Ambassador at Berlin, German travellers of every class of society grossly insulted him and the members of the Embassy at the various railway stations through which they passed on their way home.

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During and after the diplomatic conversations Austrian public opinion, or at least that of the German part of the population, seems to have been very favourable to the war, for one of those race-hatreds which even torrents of blood can scarcely wash out, existed between the Austrians and Serbians.

The diplomatic comments are as follows. The British Ambassador at Vienna wrote :—

“So just was the cause of Austria held to be, that it seemed to her people inconceivable that any country should place itself in her path, or that questions of mere policy or prestige should be regarded anywhere as superseding the necessity which had arisen to exact summary vengeance for the crime of Serajevo.”

The French Minister for Foreign Affairs telegraphed the Ambassadors :—

“The most favourable conjecture one can make is that the Vienna Cabinet feels it has been outdistanced by the Press and the military party, and is trying to obtain the maximum concessions from Serbia by preliminary intimidation, both direct and indirect, and for this purpose is depending upon the support of Germany.”

In several dispatches, of which I quote extracts, the British Ambassador at Vienna notes the popular enthusiasm at the idea of a war with Serbia :—

“This country has gone wild with joy at the prospect of war with Serbia, and its postponement or prevention would undoubtedly be a great disappointment. . . .

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"As soon as it was known, later in the evening, that the Serbian reply had been rejected and that Baron Giesl¹ had broken off relations at Belgrade, Vienna burst into a frenzy of delight, vast crowds parading the streets and singing patriotic songs till the small hours of the morning.

". . . The country certainly believed that it had before it only the alternative of subduing Serbia or of submitting sooner or later to mutilation at her hands."

This trend of public opinion perfectly explains Austria's uncompromising attitude with regard to Serbia, as is noted in the following passage from a dispatch of the same Ambassador:—

"The Austro-Hungarian Government are fully resolved to have war with Serbia; they consider their position as a Great Power to be at stake; and until punishment has been administered to Serbia it is unlikely that they will listen to proposals of mediation."

It is very difficult to obtain information concerning the state of public opinion in Russia, for the newspapers really publish nothing except material authorized by the Government, and, in any case, the Russian people had little knowledge of the Austrians, whom they seldom heard mentioned. So-called public opinion in that country was, therefore, probably that of certain high functionaries, professors, and literary men. The dispatches are not illuminating, as may be seen by the following, which is all that I have been able to gather from the diplomatic correspondence:—

¹ Austro-Hungarian Minister at Belgrade.

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1. Sir Edward Grey's dispatch of the 23rd of July, alluding to the insertion of a time-limit, which "might inflame opinion in Russia."

2. A dispatch of the 26th of July from the French Minister for Foreign Affairs: "Russian public opinion shows that it is politically and morally impossible for Russia to allow Serbia to be crushed."

3. A dispatch of the 27th of July from the French Ambassador at Berlin, saying that: "It was important not to allow one of those currents of opinion which sweeps everything away to be created in Russia."

These things are mere conjectures, however, for such vague statements, which were made at a distance from the country under discussion, and which referred only to probabilities, certainly cannot furnish any real information about Russian public opinion with regard to the war.

We know more of what happened after hostilities began. Those nations who are the most ignorant of the reasons for their dying upon the field of battle are usually those who show the most enthusiasm when war is declared, and, according to an eye-witness quoted by M. Wizewa, this was very much the case with the Russian peasants:—

"The peasants leave for the front with incredible enthusiasm, and are cheered and envied by the upper classes of society, both the Radicals and Conservatives of a short time ago. . . .

" . . . In Russia the war has suddenly set free from the depths of the national soul all sorts of precious powers and virtues which might have slept

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for ever, had this providential opportunity not occurred.

"The peasants usually feel that their only business in life is to drink; but this is now no longer the case. It seems as though the war had given them a real reason for living, and as though the true object of their existence had been found in dying. Going to war means to a Russian that he is offering his body on the altar of sacrifice.

"And in the splendid ardour of the Russian soldier, as he dashes against the enemy, one really feels the shuddering joy which stirred the hearts of martyrs in days gone by, when they sprang to embrace a death drenched in glory. . . ."

CHAPTER VI

PART PLAYED BY THE WILLS OF THE THREE EMPERORS

1. *The Will of the Austrian Emperor. Psychological Dominants of the Austrian Policy*

THE dry dispatches which we have quoted hitherto have brought us to the declaration of war, but have not yet given us a satisfactory understanding of its immediate causes, and we must now endeavour to penetrate a little more deeply into the minds of those who were the authors of this mighty drama.

In great events like wars heads of States are often credited with an influence which they either do not possess at all, or else to only a limited degree. Their conscious wills, of course, make decisions ; but they too are, unawares, obedient to an unconscious will created by many collective influences, the weight of whose suggestions becomes so heavy at a given moment that it depresses one scale of what I have called elsewhere the balance of motives.

There may be autocrats in heaven, but there are assuredly none on earth, for all alike are dominated by factors superior to their wills, as Napoleon said more than once. History indeed shows how often sovereigns have been forced to act contrary to their

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personal or conscious wills. For instance, neither the Emperor of the French nor the King of Prussia wanted war in 1870, and both did all they could to prevent it; but still they had to submit to it.

The Emperor of Austria, the first of all the heads of the States which are now at war, is a sovereign who has been conquered continually during his long reign, but who has always been rather fond of peace. His great age prevented him from taking much part in the diplomatic negotiations which led up to this war, and it is probably owing to his mediocre ministers and his no less mediocre heir, as well as to the profound antipathy felt by his nation for Serbia that he was induced to consent to an armed conflict which he was told was to be localized between Serbia and Austria.

On the other hand, his love of peace arose solely from fear of complications, and not from any natural feeling of kindness, for at the beginning of his reign he had more than once exhibited extreme severity. For instance, in consequence of an uprising in Hungary, which took place soon after he ascended the throne, he caused the most illustrious inhabitants of the country to be hanged or decapitated and their property to be confiscated, while the wives of the great personages who escaped death were publicly whipped. Among his victims was an aged man of eighty, President of the House of Magnates and of the Supreme Court of Justice.

Of the psychological dominants that inspired the Austrian statesmen to send Serbia the ultimatum which caused the war, the desire of prestige at the beginning of the affair, and suspicion of Russia at

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the end, are the two which are most conspicuous. The ultimatum to Serbia originated in the desire of prestige, and suspicion of Russia brought about the general mobilization of Austria and consequently that of the other Powers.

The dispatches of the Ambassadors, indeed, emphasize the fact that the prestige of which I have just spoken was a necessity for Austria, as may be seen from the following statement of the British Ambassador at Rome on the 23rd of July :—

“ The gravity of the situation lay in the conviction of the Austro-Hungarian Government that it was absolutely necessary for their prestige, after the many disillusiones which the turn of events in the Balkans had occasioned, to score a definite success.”

The same observation was made by the British Ambassador at Vienna in his dispatch of the 28th of July :—

“ I saw Minister for Foreign Affairs this morning.

“ His Excellency declared that Austria-Hungary cannot delay warlike proceedings against Serbia, and would have to decline any suggestion of negotiations on basis of Serbian reply.

“ Prestige of Dual Monarchy was engaged, and nothing could now prevent conflict.”

The Austrian statesmen, who were very suspicious of Russia, as protectress of Serbia, had a great dread of the other Powers too, and with Germany's support, made haste to declare war against Serbia, hoping thus to prevent the paralysing effect of a sort of European tribunal before which their country would have to explain her actions. But Austria had no desire for a European War, although she did

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wish to punish Serbia, and for this reason, notwithstanding the fact that her troops had already entered Serbian territory, she suddenly assumed a much more conciliatory attitude when it became apparent that a general conflict was impending.

This is shown by the following dispatches from the Ambassadors. The French Minister for Foreign Affairs wrote his Representatives on the 1st of August :—

“The Austrian Ambassador called upon M. Sazonoff at St. Petersburg and declared the readiness of his Government to discuss the substance of the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia. M. Sazonoff replied by expressing his satisfaction, and said it was desirable that the discussions should take place in London with the participation of the Great Powers.”

The British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs wrote thus on the 1st of August :—

“Information reaches me from a most reliable source that Austrian Government have informed German Government that though the situation has been changed by the mobilization of Russia they would, in full appreciation of the efforts of England for the preservation of peace, be ready to consider favourably my proposal for mediation between Austria and Serbia. The effect of this acceptance would naturally be that the Austrian military action against Serbia would continue for the present, and that the British Government would urge upon Russian Government to stop the mobilization of troops directed against Austria.”

Unfortunately Germany intervened at the last

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moment, for reasons which I shall attempt to explain later on, and the British Ambassador at Vienna wrote his Government :—

“These conversations at St. Petersburg and Vienna were cut short by the transfer of the dispute to the more dangerous ground of a direct conflict between Germany and Russia. Germany intervened on the 31st July by means of her double ultimatums to St. Petersburg and Paris. The ultimatums were of a kind to which only one answer is possible, and Germany declared war on Russia on the 1st August, and on France on the 3rd August. A few days’ delay might in all probability have saved Europe from one of the greatest calamities in history.”

2. *The Will of the Russian Emperor. Psychological Dominants of the Russian Policy.*

The Emperor of Russia is assuredly the most powerful of the autocrats of our day, and yet he is a striking example of the universally observed historical fact that sovereigns are perpetually constrained to act in opposition to their own volition, for throughout his reign he has almost always been forced to do the contrary of what he wished.

The Czar is an idealistic pacifist, and when he ascended the throne longed to usher in a reign of universal peace, but nevertheless Russia has never undergone such frequent, prolonged, and sanguinary wars as under his rule. She has had a war with Japan, a civil war within her own borders, and this present war against Austria and Germany.

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As I have just said, a sovereign at the present time is a synthesis of wills which are superior to his own. His power consists entirely in so controlling these wills that when they take up a new position they shall not stray from him, and above all things shall not oppose him. Herein lies the whole art of modern politics, which can guide events, but cannot create them.

The diplomatic dispatches plainly show how averse the Czar was to war and what efforts he made to prevent it. Why, then, was he obliged to consent to it?

His action was conditioned by psychological factors which were so similar to those that dominated the Austrian policy at the same time, that a conflict between them was inevitable. These factors were the desire of prestige and suspicion of a powerful neighbour.

As in a way the founder of the small Balkan States, which had formerly been ruled by Turkey, Russia considered herself under obligations to protect them against the ambitious designs of Austria. It is doubtful whether she would have lost much by allowing the Dual Monarchy to absorb them; but, as I have said before, these are questions of national self-respect, and a stranger can give no answer to them. We must therefore confine ourselves to the statement that this feeling existed, and that Austria's mobilization was unnecessary in connection with such a small State as Serbia, and could obviously be directed only against Russia, of whom she was suspicious, and by whom she could not afford to let herself be surprised.

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Austria's hasty mobilization caused that of Russia and precipitated the catastrophe. The diplomatic reports show the reasons which led the Czar's Government to take measures that were quite as rash.

The British Ambassador at St. Petersburg wrote on the 29th of July :—

“ Had not Russia by mobilizing shown that she was in earnest, Austria would have traded on Russia's desire for peace, and would have believed that she could go to any lengths.”

And the French Ambassador at St. Petersburg said on the 29th of July :—

“ The Russian General Staff has ascertained that Austria is hastening her military preparations against Russia and accelerating her mobilization, which has begun on the Galician frontier. Consequently the order for mobilization will be sent to-night to the thirteen army corps which are to operate eventually against Austria.”

In spite of this mobilization, which was occasioned principally by mistrust, Russia did not appear aggressive. In order to make sure of peace she declared at the last moment that she would be satisfied with a promise to respect the independence of Serbia. The British Ambassador at Vienna wrote on the 1st of August :—

“ Russia would, according to the Russian Ambassador, be satisfied even now with assurance respecting Serbian integrity and independence. He says that Russia had no intention to attack Austria. He is going again to-day to point out to the Minister for Foreign Affairs that most terrific consequences

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must ensue from refusal to make this slight concession. This time Russia would fight to the last extremity." "

3. *The Will of the German Emperor and the Factors Leading to his Decision.*

More than one attempt has been made to depict the psychology of the German Emperor, but we shall here study only those of its elements which may have induced him to declare war at the last moment.

In spite of the warlike preparations by which he sought to prevent any Power whatsoever from attacking him, he was unquestionably a lover of peace, as is clearly proved by the fact that during the twenty-five years of his reign he solved many a difficulty which threatened to involve his country in war. The French Ambassador at Berlin does not dispute this, and merely notes in one of his reports :—

" That the Emperor is familiarizing himself with a class of ideas which was formerly disagreeable to him, and that, to borrow a figure of speech which he is fond of using, 'we must keep our powder dry.' "

William the Second is very impulsive, very selfish, and very devout, and has always really believed himself God's chosen vessel, as he has said so often. When he declared war he made the following speech to his soldiers :—

" Remember that the German people are the chosen of God. On me, as German Emperor, the

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spirit of God has descended. I am His weapon, His sword, and His vice-regent. Woe to the disobedient! Death to cowards and unbelievers!"

Mr. Lloyd George said of this speech:—

"There has been nothing like it since the days of Mahomet. Lunacy is always distressing. But sometimes it is dangerous. And when you get it manifested in the head of a State, and it has become the policy of a great Empire, it is about time it should be ruthlessly put away."

Lunacy it is not; but it is certainly a paroxysm of the mystic spirit.

In order to gain a complete understanding of the way in which the idea of war arose in the German Emperor's mind, we must take care to note that, although he was so fond of peace, he was always ready to threaten. He was constantly talking about the sharpened sword, dry powder, and so forth, and he journeyed to Morocco, Constantinople, and the Holy Land, bearing personal offers of protection, and everywhere overflowing with threatening speeches. He wished to make himself feared, for he thought that his powerful army would grant him the 'leading part on the stage of Europe, without any necessity of fighting for it.

His system was not at all a bad one, since it gave him all he wanted for many years, made the French yield in Morocco, and kept Russia silent when Austria, upheld by German threats, defied the treaties and took Bosnia and Herzegovina.

His menacing attitude had been so successful up to the present time that he could hardly believe

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it would not answer in the case of Serbia. The German diplomatic reports, from which I have quoted extracts, informed him that France and Russia were absolutely unable to make war, while England was threatened with civil war in Ireland, and appeared even less prepared for hostilities than they.

Given these circumstances, why should the Emperor of Germany have consented to countenance a Congress which, like all Congresses, would have offered one of those ill-begotten solutions that satisfy nobody, and which would certainly have prevented Austria from taking the desired revenge upon Serbia for the assassination of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand?

The Emperor was a lover of peace, and had no interest in going to war. What motives, then, could have led him to do so?

The military reasons, which I shall now explain, seem to have been what finally decided him, and in order to realize their importance we must first demonstrate what a vital matter the mobilization dates seemed to the Kaiser as well as to the Czar, for they were the ultimate and decisive factors which thrust the mighty German and Russian Empires into the path of death. The following dispatches from the French and British Ambassadors plainly show the fears excited by the prospect of mobilization, and they also prove that at the last moment each of the two Empires ran a veritable race to prevent the adversary whom it mistrusted from getting a start of it.

Austria began operations, and Russia imitated

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her forthwith, as the French Ambassador at St. Petersburg announced on the 31st of July:—

“Owing to general mobilization in Austria and the preparations for mobilization secretly but continuously made by Germany for the last six days, order has been issued for general mobilization of the Russian Army, as Russia cannot without the most serious peril afford to let Austria get a further start of her.”

After a conversation with the Imperial Chancellor, the British Ambassador at Berlin wrote on the 31st of July:—

“Chancellor informs me that his efforts to preach peace and moderation at Vienna have been seriously handicapped by the Russian mobilization against Austria. . . . He could not, however, leave his country defenceless while time was being utilized by other Powers; and if, as he learns is the case, military measures are now being taken by Russia against Germany also, it would be impossible for him to remain quiet. He wished to tell me that it was quite possible that in a very short time, to-day perhaps, the German Government would take some very serious step; he was, in fact, just on the point of going to have an audience with the Emperor.

“His Excellency added that the news of the active preparations on the Russo-German frontier had reached him just when the Czar had appealed to the Emperor, in the name of their old friendship, to mediate at Vienna, and when the Emperor was actually conforming to that request.”

Russia justified herself for having hastened her

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mobilization, as the British Ambassador at Paris wrote on the 1st of August :—

“ His Excellency was informed that it was only after a decree of general mobilization had been issued by Austria that the Emperor of Russia ordered a general mobilization, and that the Russian Government were prepared to demobilize if all the Great Powers would do the same.”

Germany feared the mobilization of Russia so much that on the 31st of July she addressed to that country an ultimatum which could obviously not be accepted, for its terms were demobilization within twelve hours. On the 1st of August she declared war.

Before matters had reached this stage, the Kaiser had personally made a very urgent appeal to the Czar to stop mobilization. It proves not only his fear of mobilization, but also a real wish on his part to try and keep up peace. I give below some extracts from this correspondence, beginning with the first dispatch from the German Emperor to his cousin, dated the 28th of July. The most important paragraphs are the following :—

“ I have learned with the greatest concern of the impression which Austria's advance against Serbia has produced in your Empire. The unscrupulous agitation which has been going on in Serbia for years has led up to the monstrous outrage of which the Archduke Francis Ferdinand was the victim.

“ I do not at all hide from myself how difficult it is for you and your Government to withstand the pressure of public opinion, and in memory of

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the cordial friendship which has long been a bond between us both, I am exerting all my influence to induce Austria-Hungary to come to a loyal and satisfactory understanding with Russia. I rely upon you to assist me in the efforts I am making to remove any difficulties which may arise later on."

The Czar replied, thanking the Kaiser for his mediation, and the latter again telegraphed on the 29th of July :—

"Any Russian military measures which Austria might consider menacing would hasten to bring about a calamity which both you and I are trying to avert, and would likewise render my mission as mediator impossible."

On the 30th of July, at one o'clock in the morning, there was another telegram from the German Emperor :—

"My Ambassador has been instructed to call the attention of your Government to the dangers and serious consequences of mobilization. This is what I told you in my last telegram. Austria-Hungary has mobilized only against Serbia, and no more than a part of her army. If it is the case, as your telegram and the communication of your Government indicate, that Russia is mobilizing against Austria-Hungary, the success of the mission of mediation with which you amicably entrusted me, and which I accepted at your request, will be endangered or perhaps made impossible. The whole burden of the decision to be arrived at now rests upon your shoulders, which will have to bear the responsibility of war or peace."

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The Czar replied on the 30th of July, at 1.20 p.m. :—

“The military measures which have now been taken were decided upon five days ago as a precaution against the preparations of Austria.

“I hope most sincerely that these measures will not in any way hinder your mediation, which I value greatly.”

On the 31st of July, at 2 p.m., the Emperor of Germany made a last endeavour :—

“I undertook to mediate between your Government and the Austro-Hungarian Government.

“While this negotiation was still proceeding, your troops were mobilized against Austria-Hungary, my Ally, and in consequence of this, as I have already informed you, my intervention became almost illusory. In spite of this I continued.

“I have just received reliable information of serious warlike preparations on my eastern frontier, and as I am responsible for the security of my Empire, I am obliged to adopt similar measures of defence.

“I have done everything possible in my efforts to keep the peace, and it is not I who will bear the responsibility of the frightful disaster which at present menaces the whole civilized world.

“Even now it depends only upon you to prevent it. No one threatens the honour and authority of Russia, and she might very well have awaited the result of my intervention.”

No reply was made to this telegram, and on the 31st of July Russia was sent an official summons to demobilize within twelve hours. This meant war.

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After war had been declared the German Emperor's attitude was not that of a man who was pleased with the success of a cleverly concocted plot, as is proved by the unusual and outrageous way in which he caused the French Ambassador to be treated. I have spoken of the brutal manner in which the representative of France was escorted to the frontier, how he was obliged to stop in a closed railway carriage without a drop of water or a bite of bread for twenty-six hours, and was forced to pay five thousand francs in gold for his journey. The person responsible for this discourteous action was so ashamed of it that in the end he gave the money back.

The peace-loving Kaiser, who found it impossible to prevent a war which he did not desire, was incensed to a degree, and this fact alone can explain the imperious ultimatum addressed to Russia, after a series of very friendly dispatches. But where are we to find the motive for such precipitance on the part of a sovereign who certainly wished for peace? What urgent necessity made him decide to declare war at the last moment?

Obviously the Kaiser was afraid of giving his future adversaries time for preparation; but this is a form of speech which is intelligible only when one understands the immense advantage that rapidity of mobilization meant to Germany in case of a conflict. The German General Staff knew that France required about twenty days to mobilize, and Russia about two months, and thought that the rapidity of the German mobilization would enable it to throw all its forces against France and

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to crush her first, and then to turn back and attack Russia. This plan would utterly miscarry, however, if Russia should utilize diplomatic conversations of unknown duration in order to accomplish her mobilization, and in that case the Kaiser would have two enemies to contend with in place of one. This was the situation he wished to avoid by sending his ultimatum.

4. Various Factors which may have Influenced the Unconscious Will of the German Emperor.

In addition to the rational motives of a strategic nature which I have just mentioned, other factors may have acted upon the unconscious will of the German Emperor and brought about his conscious decision. We must take the fact into consideration that the peace-loving Kaiser's popularity with the army was waning, whilst that of his warlike son was increasing. Upon three or four occasions, especially in connection with Morocco, the army had thought itself upon the point of making war, but Germany had drawn back. The Pan-Germanists were inciting to the fray, and the desire of universal domination at last seemed easy of realization. But the question was whether it would not be more difficult in a few years' time, when Russia should have completed her railway system, which was still so far from perfect. All these reasons together, no doubt, contributed to the decision made by the Emperor of Germany.

In bringing this chapter to a close, I must say once more that the encouragement given to Austria

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by Germany and the uncompromising attitude of the Dual Monarchy were mainly due to the erroneous idea, which was held by the German statesmen, and which hovered over all the diplomatic negotiations of the fateful week, that neither Russia, France, nor England would go to war. This error of judgment on the part of rulers who were not very discerning is chiefly responsible for the death of millions of men and the devastation of many flourishing European cities.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION. WHO WANTED THE WAR?

1. *Summary of Events which Caused the War*

THE events which preceded the war have, I think, been made quite plain enough to preclude any particular necessity for a summary of them, but I shall give one nevertheless, in order to epitomize the facts; for their study from the official documents is a rather tedious affair.

Let us put aside the series of remote causes leading up to the gigantic conflagration, so that we may reach its starting-point in the Austrian Archduke's assassination, which was due to a conspiracy fomented in Serbia.

Austria resolved to avenge the death of the heir to the throne and at the same time to put her prestige in the Balkans upon a somewhat better footing, for it had suffered from a succession of retrograde movements on her part during the Balkan War. She therefore sent Serbia an ultimatum which that country could not accept and the rejection of which would enable her to declare war. In doing this Austria could not see that any risk was involved, for Germany's support had been secured, and, what was the main point, all the reports from her diplomats guaranteed that Russia,

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and consequently France, would remain neutral perforce, because of their weakness and domestic dissensions. Russia had already given way in the case of Bosnia, and would surely yield once more, while England was threatened with civil war in Ireland and would be most unlikely to interfere in a question which did not concern her.

By taking this step, as she ardently desired to do, Austria would win a new province and would re-establish her vanishing prestige in the eyes of the Slavs. Germany would not of course benefit in a material way, but the moral advantage which she would gain would be of considerable importance, for she would have imposed her will upon Europe once more, and would have left a deeper impress of her fast-growing hegemony. Best of all, her success would cost her nothing but the firmness required to forbid the interference of any foreign Power in the quarrel between Austria and Serbia.

What was attempted was exactly this, as a matter of fact. But in contriving their well-thought-out scheme the diplomats of the Central Empires unfortunately forgot to consider certain affective, mystic, and collective elements, from the influence of which no historical event can escape, and which obey logical sequences that are not at all like those of reason. No flaw could be found in their anticipations or their arguments, and yet the result showed that they were entirely mistaken. Russia, too, had great need of prestige and under similar circumstances had previously submitted to such a complete humiliation that she could not tolerate a fresh one.

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The war really originated in this psychological error with regard to Russia's non-intervention, for, starting from the false premises that she would yield and that none of the Powers would interfere, all the consequences of the tragedy were bound to ensue. With the idea of frightening Russia, Austria and Germany assumed an arrogant bearing, while Russia, who wished to avert the war, proposed negotiations. This, however, merely strengthened the conviction of her adversaries that they need not fear a general conflict ; their attitude accordingly grew more uncompromising, and at last Austria thought she might safely declare war against Serbia. Her decision was considered very clever by the Austrian diplomats, but was extremely stupid, on the contrary, for it left no loophole of escape in case the Great Powers should decide to intervene, as they actually did at the last moment.

When Germany and Austria—especially Austria—found that their uncompromising attitude was about to cause a European war, they became conciliatory and did all in their power to prevent the catastrophe, but it was too late. The German Emperor's urgent telegrams to the Czar of Russia were all in vain, for the men who had swayed events up to that time were fated thenceforth to be controlled by them.

At the eleventh hour, just before war was declared, the sentiment of self-respect and the desire of prestige, which had hitherto been the exclusive motives of conduct, passed away, and a new feeling appeared upon the scene. This was

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the mistrust which was destined unaided to render the conflict inevitable.

It was really mistrust which led each side to accelerate its military preparations so that it might not be surprised by the adversary, for in case of a struggle it appeared that haste would be a necessary condition for success.

Austria had mobilized against Serbia in order to show that her mind was fully made up, and also to intimidate Russia ; for she knew perfectly well that her usual standing army was quite strong enough to deal with such a very small State as Serbia, which was, moreover, already exhausted by two recent wars.

Russia, as she had every right to do, supposed that Austria's mobilization was directed against herself, and mobilized in turn to avoid being caught napping.

Germany was unwilling to let any one pass her in the race, and sent Russia an imperious summons to demobilize at once, in the hope of inducing that Power to reveal its real intentions. It is clear that the Russian mobilization was a somewhat hasty measure ; but the Czar could not submit to the Kaiser's brutal behest. The feelings involved were too strong for either side to yield, and the result of their persistence was war.

France was obliged to follow her Ally, notwithstanding her earnest desire for peace.

England was very anxious to take no part in the conflict, but a fresh psychological error was fated to draw her into it. The German General Staff was convinced that Great Britain would be in-

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different to the violation of Belgium, and as it had no regard for the sacredness of a treaty in time of war, marched into that country without the slightest hesitation. This blunder, which had already been condemned by von Moltke on strategical grounds, added England to the number of Germany's enemies, and was not of the least advantage to the Teutonic cause, for if the Kaiser's army had simply passed through Luxemburg it would not have lost a fortnight in front of Liége, and would have approached Paris much sooner.

It has been said, with good reason, that if the negotiations had been conducted a little more patiently the war would have been averted. There seems no doubt of the fact ; but judging from what we have seen of the remote causes leading up to the conflagration, it would merely have been postponed, for there were so many sources of trouble between Germany and the other Great Powers that the costly armed peace with which Europe had hitherto been forced to content herself could not have been of long duration.

2. How Answer the Question, Who Wanted the War?

I observed in a former chapter that it would be no exaggeration to answer the question of who wanted the war by saying that no one wanted it, for, as a matter of fact, no one did. Nevertheless, war was declared by the Emperor of Germany, and therefore the responsibility for it is his. It is merely from the psychological point of view

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that we are interested in showing that he did not want it.

Until I had made a careful study of the documents I shared the belief of most people in France that Germany was looking for an excuse to make war upon us, and had taken advantage of the first opportunity. This was the opinion expressed by a distinguished Academician in a work on *The Lessons of the Yellow Book*, and also by two learned professors of the Sorbonne in a painstaking dissertation written in accordance with all the rules of the historical method and entitled *Who Wanted the War?*

But even while at first I agreed with this common opinion, there were yet certain objections which made me hesitate. There was no doubt that a war between England and Germany seemed inevitable in the more or less remote future, but I was fain to ask myself, What could have been the advantage which the Teutonic Empire sought in quarrelling with France and Russia at the present time, when they were its best commercial customers, and were becoming more infiltrated every day with its agents and its wares? Surely there had been better opportunities for making an attack, especially at the time when Russia had been defeated by Japan and was in the throes of revolution, and, as I have already mentioned, could not by any possibility have defended herself.

As I studied the documents with more care, a light dawned upon my mind, and I came to the conclusion that although Germany had made war inevitable by the continual augmentation of her

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armaments and by the increasing arrogance of her diplomacy, nevertheless she had no desire whatever for a conflict at the time when it actually occurred.¹ And even in the absence of the documents which I have quoted, there are several facts of a psychological nature that in my opinion are quite sufficient to justify this theory.

In the first place, there are the urgent telegrams from the German Emperor, begging the Czar at the last moment to stop the military measures which, as he said, would force him to mobilize too, in order not to be taken unawares, and even reminding his cousin of the promise of friendship towards Russia made to his dying grandfather. Now, if the Kaiser had already decided to declare war this hypocrisy would have been useless, so that his telegrams were probably quite sincere, and, as the first was written only three days before the beginning of hostilities, it seems beyond question that even at that late date he was not at all determined to have war, but was making every effort to prevent it.

I believe that this argument is conclusive, and no less convincing is the attack of despair to which

¹ For a long time I believed that I was the only person in France who held this opinion. But the evidence of the documents has finally persuaded some others who have studied it. In his work on *La Guerre de 1914*, which was published while I was correcting the proofs of the present book, M. Victor Basch, a professor in the Sorbonne, writes: "Yes, Germany wanted peace, a peace imposed by her, a Teutonic peace, a peace submitted to by all the Powers like a capitulation. Germany did not want war at any price, and above all she did not want the sort of war upon which she has embarked" (p. 77).

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the German Ambassador at St. Petersburg gave way, as we are told by the British Ambassador in a document which I have already quoted:—

“ He completely broke down on seeing that war was inevitable. He appealed to M. Sazonoff to make some suggestion which he could telegraph to German Government as a last hope.”

Surely this was not the attitude of an Ambassador who was endeavouring to bring about a war under instructions from his Government. His emotion is, in fact, to be compared with that which the Minister for Foreign Affairs at Berlin displayed to the British Ambassador in a conversation which I have quoted elsewhere.

It is hardly credible that persons of high standing, far distant from one another, should have been in collusion to feign the same sort of despair; for in this case, too, hypocrisy seems so unnecessary that it becomes improbable.

To these three sorts of proofs we may also add the information given by a French Admiral in the *Revue de Paris*, that on the 26th of July the whole German fleet was manœuvring at a great distance from its base, and could not have coaled or taken on its full crews if the British fleet had interfered with it.

We must, therefore, exclude any desire for hostilities on the part of the German Emperor. But the fact remains that he declared war. Why did he do so?

I have shown the answer plainly in my last chapter, by pointing out what a complication of suspicions urged him on. The feeling which

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dominated him was fear lest by entering upon protracted and perhaps unsuccessful negotiations he would be giving Russia time to complete her mobilization, and thus to spoil the plan of a rapid offensive which had been drawn up by his General Staff. Less mistrust would have made him a little more patient, for Austria was beginning to give way ; but his entourage probably influenced him at the last moment. However this may be, Kaiser and Czar were agreed in wishing to avert a general war, nor was such a conflict desired by the Emperor of Austria ; but the mutual suspicion of all three inevitably brought it about.

This is the reason why one may answer the question of Who wanted the war? by saying, " No, one " ; but the reply to the other question, viz. What were the immediate causes of the conflict? must be, " The mutual mistrust of the three Emperors." The Emperor of Germany was the most suspicious of all, and this is why he will be held responsible for the war, since it was he who made up his mind to declare it.

He is also to be held accountable for having instigated the massacres and devastation of Louvain, Reims, Ypres, and other cities, because no general would have dared to order them without his permission. This will be his eternal shame.

* * *

The question which I have been discussing in several chapters of this book is one of great psychological interest, because it illustrates the conflict of some of the feelings which inspire men's actions

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and shows how these feelings arise and grow. But practically there is no importance in the problem of the war's origins, although it has affected professors and academicians so strongly. Various remote circumstances rendered the conflict inevitable, and it makes very little difference to know who caused its outbreak at the last moment.

The popular mind, which considers the matter exactly in this way, has a better appreciation of the case than have the scholars, for it does not attempt to find out whether Germany, Russia, or Austria wanted the war, nor does it lose its way in a subtle analysis of diplomatic documents which may be variously interpreted ; but, nevertheless, it has a very proper feeling that Germany was repeating the menacing tricks she had already employed at Tangier, Algeçiras, Casablanca, and Agadir. Everywhere in France one heard the same exclamation, "We cannot go on like this," and everywhere people resigned themselves to a struggle that, as was plain to be seen, could not be averted. Under these circumstances it made little difference whether Germany had resolved to have war at the last moment, or whether she had not, for she would have caused it without fail sooner or later by the repeated threats which she thought her growing power enabled her to utter with safety. It was better that France should not endure new humiliations for the sake of postponing the inevitable day of settlement for but a little time.

CHAPTER VIII

OPINIONS EXPRESSED IN GERMANY AND VARIOUS OTHER COUNTRIES AS TO THE CAUSES OF THE WAR

1. *Psychological Bases of Opinions Expressed with Regard to the War*

THE strange opinions about the causes of the war held by certain German writers, and the violence with which they have been expressed have on the whole been rather a surprise to neutrals.

In the following chapter I shall mention the most important of them—I mean to say, those expressed by scholars of standing. In order to understand the genesis of these opinions I shall beg the reader to refer to the principles laid down in my book *Les Opinions et les Croyances*, where he will see that beliefs derived from collective, affective, and mystic sources cannot be influenced by argument, and where he will also learn in what way the individual mind blends with the collective mind, what are the great factors of persuasion, and, lastly, what is the mechanism which forms those currents of opinion that at a given moment carry a whole nation along with them.

Each of these phenomena has its own laws, some of which I have attempted to ascertain ; but when

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I wrote the work which I devoted to their investigation I could not, of course, imagine that a European war would so soon furnish striking proofs of the principles which I had laid down.

The opinions which are generally held in Germany with regard to the causes of the war, and which I am now about to set forth, show how entirely inaccessible to the influence of argument is a belief established by suggestion and propagated by mental contagion, as they also prove that the loftiest intellect will not prevent a man who is the slave of such an overmastering belief from being completely deluded by it.

The opinions which I shall relate in the very words of their authors were for the most part expressed with the fury and violence that characterize the birth of a new faith, and are really psychological documents of priceless value. How impressive it is, indeed, to see the venerable Wundt, one of the most illustrious scholars of Germany, allowing himself to pour forth floods of abuse against mighty nations, whom he stigmatizes as brigands and assassins.

These explosions of savage wrath have impressed others beside myself, as, for instance, Professor Grau, of the University of Christiania. This author belongs to a neutral nation, but in a lecture (translated in the *Revue du Mois*) he expresses his amazement at the extent to which the good sense of distinguished thinkers has deteriorated in consequence of the war. M. Grau avails himself of the principles of collective psychology, which I laid down many years ago, to show that the most intelligent man

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loses all his critical faculties when he is surrounded by the collective mind. He gives as an example the delusions of such a distinguished thinker as the celebrated philosopher Professor Eucken, who tells us that the war in which the Germans are engaged is Germany's mission to regenerate the human race: "We are not fighting for ourselves alone, we are fighting for the good of mankind."

Wundt, the illustrious psychologist whom I have already quoted, is still more explicit:—

"The war which Germany is waging against her enemies is a real war, war in the proper meaning of the term, a just and a holy war; but the war which the French, Russians, and English are waging is something quite different.

"No, our enemies' war is not a true war; it is not even war at all, for war, too, has its rights and laws; but this is an infamous attack of brigands helped out by assassination, piracy, and buccanering. It is not an open struggle, fought with honourable arms."

M. Grau believes that few German scholars have been able to escape this paroxysm of collective madness.

2. Opinions of German Diplomats.

Since the beginning of hostilities the German diplomats have made every effort to show that their Government, although responsible for declaring the war, did not really cause it.

I have already given an extract from the speeches of the Chancellor of the German Empire. Here is a

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portion of one which he delivered in the Reichstag on December 2, 1914:—

“The British Cabinet allowed this monstrous universal war to occur, because it believed that the support of the other Entente Powers would enable it to find in the struggle an opportunity of striking at the vitals of England's greatest competitor in the markets of the world.

“Before God and man, England and Russia therefore bear the responsibility of the catastrophe which has descended upon Europe and upon the world.”

The Chancellor evidently considered his belief a reality when he stated that England desired to punish a world-wide competitor; but, on the contrary, it may be affirmed, from the documents which I have quoted in other chapters, that she cast the idea of war from her with the greatest horror, and did her utmost to prevent the conflict.

In his book on German politics, Prince von Bülow, the predecessor of the present Chancellor, gives a good description of the extremely unaggressive character of the British policy:—

“A British policy determined to go to any lengths during the ten years which followed the passage of the Navy Bill and our earliest shipbuilding activities, could no doubt have put a complete stop to Germany's maritime development and thereby have rendered us harmless. *England's reluctance to make war has allowed us to get a grip on the sea.*”

More than once the Imperial Chancellor has reverted to the question of the war's origin and the

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reasons for violating the neutrality of Belgium, and has not even hesitated to falsify documents in order to justify his cause. During the sack of Belgium some of his representatives discovered certain papers which mentioned conversations that had taken place in 1906 and 1912 between the English and Belgian military attachés, as to the means of protecting Belgium in case she were attacked. The Chancellor's report of these conversations suppressed the passage which stated that they had in view only the contingency of a violation of Belgian neutrality, and the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* translated the word *conversation* by *agreement*. The Belgian Legation has, of course, called attention to this scandalous forgery.

Such behaviour is always dangerous, for one misrepresentation requires the support of many others, to the serious damage of one's reputation.

3. *Opinions of the Influential German Press and of the German Professors.*

The German diplomats were perhaps not very accurate in their statements, but there was at least some probability in what they said, which was far from being the case with the Teutonic professors, whose mentality is apparently upon a far lower plane. Now that they have suddenly come forth from their laboratories and have embarked upon questions that are quite new to them, these specialists, who are in some instances very celebrated men, exhibit the strangest weakness of the reasoning faculty, as well as the most

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complete ignorance of the mentality of other nations.

M. Kostyleff points out some of their odd statements as follows :—

“ At first they attacked the Russian Ambassador at Paris, saying that he had prepared the way for the war and had caused its outbreak ; and then they blamed King Edward, Sir Edward Grey, Mr. Winston Churchill, the Grand Duke Nicholas, and even . . . M. Poincaré. I refer those who wish to see the evidence of the documents on this subject to articles in the *Neue Freie Presse* of the 2nd of October, and the *Frankfurter Zeitung* of the 3rd. The one in the latter is entitled *The Conspiracy of the Triple Entente*, and is particularly instructive, but it is outdone by a similar article which was published in the Bulgarian paper *Kambana*, and which asserts that the whole matter had already been arranged by the English, French, and Russian Governments at the time of the Balkan War ” (*Scientia*).

Professor L. Brentano, of the University of Munich, is quite as quaint in his remarks. He declares that the French are making war to avenge themselves for the humiliation of 1870, and to re-establish the Monarchy as well. The following are a few extracts from his article :—

“ The French reactionaries were not altogether pleased to have the idea of *revanche* weakened. . . . People in Paris were beginning to cherish the thought of re-establishing the Monarchy, and many of them believed that a war would bring in the sovereign they desired. The leaders in the *Gaulois*

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and the *Figaro* for the last few years, as well as Maurice Barrès' articles, and the songs which were to be heard in the Parisian cabarets, are enough to prove that France, or at all events Paris, was ripe for Monarchy and desired war."

Professor Eduard Meyer, of the University of Berlin, has less original ideas, for, like most of his compatriots, he merely lays the blame on the English, whose horrible devices he thus reveals to the world:—

"There is no one in Germany, from the highest to the lowest, who does not realize that England is our mortal enemy, that it is England who has forced us to fight for our lives, and that it is England, again, who, for the sake of her own selfish interests and with the one and only object of ruining our State and destroying our independent existence as a nation, has dragged to the field of battle the other peoples who are sending their armies against us.

". . . It is an unquestionable fact that the British Government deliberately instigated this war.

". . . They would have been glad to postpone the outbreak of war for a time, and this was the aim of the conference which Sir Edward Grey made every effort to convoke.

"The Allies would thus have gained time in which to complete their preparations, and Austria and Germany would have been subjected to a great humiliation as well. . . . This plan was spoilt by Germany's ultimatum, which was sent after Russia had begun to mobilize. It was time for Germany to draw her sword, unless she wanted to be taken unawares and to brave the inevitable war under

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conditions which were sure to become more disadvantageous to her."

The author does not appear to be very familiar with the history of his own country, for he concludes by assuring his contemporaries that:—

"Germany, as we can say with a calm conscience, has never desired to pursue a policy of conquest, nor to attack foreign peoples in defiance of the law of nations."

Not even Belgium, I dare say!

This opinion with regard to England's warlike intentions is shared to an equal degree by great manufacturers like Herr Schrodter, the manager of an important industrial establishment. In a speech delivered before a society of German engineers, on January 31, 1915, he said:—

"The proofs which convince us that the war is a diabolical plot on the part of the British Government are increasing in number."

The stubbornness of the Germans in blaming England without any evidence whatsoever has greatly impressed the neutral nations, as may be seen by this passage from the *Journal de Genève* of March 26, 1915:—

"When the German Press describes England as the instigator of the war, it must imagine that its readers are utterly incapable of thought or memory. In all the world there has never been a more invariably pacific Government—we should like to say, a more pacifist Government—than that which ruled Great Britain in August 1914. It was constantly endeavouring to bring about a simultaneous reduction of naval armaments."

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4. *Opinions of German Military Men.*

Most of the German military men who have given their opinions also share the idea which is so prevalent in Germany, that the war was instigated by England; but some of them ascribe it merely to the hasty mobilization of Russia.

The following is a portion of an interview with General von Falkenhayn, the Chief of the German General Staff. It appeared in the *Journal de Genève* of January 25, 1915:—

“This war is not one of aggression on our part, and was not provoked by any caste or military party, but is a war of defence, forced upon us by the mobilization of Russia. When confronted by this mobilization we had no other course than to make our own preparations. Russia had been advised and cautioned by the Emperor and by our Ambassador at St. Petersburg; she knew that if she mobilized we should order general mobilization for our defence, and should take all the measures necessary to protect our existence as a nation. In spite of this Russia continued to mobilize even while she was negotiating.”

General von Moltke, recently Chief of the German General Staff, lays the blame on England, like most of his compatriots. *The Times* of January 23, 1915, published an interview given by him to a German newspaper. After saying that no one in Germany wanted war, he added:—

“If we were so eager to make war, why did we not do so when Russia was defenceless during the Russo-Japanese War, or when England was so absorbed in the Boer War?

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"I have never doubted for a single moment that England would take part in a war against us, because it was in the interest of her policy to cause an outbreak of hostilities. She had been getting ready for a long time, and the Belgian question was a mere pretext. . . .

"You may be sure that this war is a terrible blow to the Emperor."

5. *German Public Opinion.*

The great majority of the German people, including the middle classes, have no opinions except those that are prescribed for them; for the Teuton is so well disciplined and has such respect for authority that he cannot profess any personal ideas unlike those of his Government, and one may therefore seek in vain for differences of public opinion.

Few Germans, indeed, out of all the seventy millions are not convinced that the war is the result of a wicked plot concocted by England with the hope of subverting their country's power. This belief caused the people to greet the announcement of hostilities with an enthusiasm which was solicitously fostered by the Press. Many telegrams appeared with news of victory, but no defeat was acknowledged, the battle of the Marne was not so much as mentioned, and it was stated that strategical reasons alone kept the Germans from marching into Paris. A Swiss who visited Germany during the first part of December thus describes the mentality of the German people in time of war :—

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"The whole German nation is sure of victory, of the invincibility of the army, and of the purity, nay more, of the sacredness, of its cause ; for while liberty has developed a sense of individuality which encourages the appearance of initiative and brings out the energy of private persons in all democratic nations, the rule of the German corporal has endowed the Teutonic race with a collective mind, which cannot be roused except by influences from high quarters. The chemist Ostwald considers this the confirmation of a superiority which our Latin civilization can neither understand nor tolerate.

"Given its peculiar mentality, it is easy to understand that the German nation trusts blindly to the ideas of those who govern it and shares their views, while it looks upon everything that reaches it from the ultra-mundane spheres ruled by its Kaiser and his Ministers as gospel truth. This is why the German is sincere when he asserts that the General Staff alone tells the truth and that the Allies publish nothing but falsehood ; when he affirms that it is only the *Wolff Bureau* which gives a true and accurate statement of facts and that *enemy* newspapers are lie-factories ; and when he maintains that Germany had a right to violate the neutrality of Belgium because that country had made a secret treaty with England. No argument can convince him of the contrary ; for he knows that he alone is right, and that all the other nations are lying " (*Le Temps*).

All the psychological characteristics of the faith exhibited by devotees are here recognizable.

The much-discussed *Wolff Bureau* was the chief

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among several news agencies which were instructed to work upon German public opinion continually. Its most improbable fabrications were received with religious respect, and an outraged Germany learned from it that young Belgian girls gouged out the eyes of soldiers, and that the wounded were dispatched by priests.

The same Agency flooded the world with a succession of astounding items of news. *La France* of October 18, 1914, published one of the telegrams which it had sent to the newspapers of the small South American Republics, and of which the following is an extract :—

“A very large fleet of Zeppelins succeeded in reaching London last night. The German soldiers entered the Royal Palace and captured King George, who, upon being made prisoner, at once bought his liberty by the payment of one hundred million marks in gold.”

Statements of this sort were of course kept for those primitive countries whose inhabitants were supposed to be simple-minded and easy to deceive. In such cases the writers of these telegrams gave free rein to their imaginations, as may be seen from this announcement which the German Press Bureau at Constantinople published in the Turkish newspapers :—

“According to a wireless message from Amsterdam, the British Government has offered his Islamic Majesty two thousand asses laden with gold on condition that he will agree not to attack London with his powerful fleet.”

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6. *Neutral Opinions.*

Opinions as to the causes of the war differ according to the nationality of the authors who express them.

The influence of the military party in Germany, a conspiracy on the part of the Triple Entente, the Crown Prince's megalomania, the French desire of *revanche*, Russian Pan-Slavism, and the ambitions of Austria have all been mentioned as such. Many independent writers, however, have hesitated about expressing an opinion, and have come to somewhat the same conclusion as the celebrated historian Ferrero, who says :—

"The problem of responsibilities which weighs so heavily upon the conscience of the civilized world to-day cannot be solved at the present time."

This author thinks it a mere probability that "the Teutonic propaganda and the War Party had created a domestic situation against which the Government could not hold out indefinitely."

Generally speaking, neutral opinion about the causes of the war has not been a result of observation of fact or rational verification, but has been due to affective or mystic inclinations. In the beginning the Catholics, or at least those of Spain and Italy, took sides with Germany, and indeed this feeling was fairly general, as we see from M. Dudon's article in the religious review *Les Etudes* of January 1915:—

"At the first sound of the guns they sincerely desired that Germany might win, for Providence owed her a brilliant military success. She deserved

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nothing less as a reward for the Kaiser's piety, the uprightness of his subjects, the good works of the German Catholics, and the orthodoxy and loyalty of Austria. If the Germans lost what would become of Europe? What was in store for it if subjected to the influence of Protestant England, schismatic Russia, and revolutionary France?

"Unless God had resolved to overwhelm the West and consequently the whole world in a flood of laic wickedness, Germany must triumph, for with her victory would come that of the social, political, and religious order."

But the war has changed many things, and now at last has moderated even the mentality of those who could look upon a struggle like this as a Divine punishment. The few French Catholics who were tempted to make similar explanations soon gave up the idea, and are among the bravest of the brave upon the field of battle.

BOOK V
PSYCHOLOGICAL FORCES INVOLVED
IN BATTLES

CHAPTER I

CHANGES IN METHODS OF WARFARE

1. *The Unexpected in Modern Warfare. New Elements*

I DO not intend to make a detailed investigation here into the new and sometimes very unexpected forms assumed by modern warfare, but as I wish to emphasize the part taken in it by psychological factors, I shall be obliged to indicate briefly the conditions under which the European conflict is being carried on at the present time.

The war will prove to be a powerful element of individual, political, and social development ; for it will change armaments, strategy, humanitarian conceptions, ideas of right, manners and customs, and, in a word, everything else, and will exert as profound an influence upon the life of mankind as did the French Revolution.

Before I examine certain of these changes separately, I shall summarize them as a whole, and show how they affect battles fought on top of the ground as well as underneath it, battles on the sea and below its surface, and last of all, battles in the air.

Modern land warfare is characterized in the first place by the substitution of armies composed of several millions of combatants for the older forces,

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which consisted of no more than a few hundred thousand men, as well as by the enormous extent of the battlefields, which now stretch out for many hundreds of miles, where once they were confined to a limited space.

Along the whole extent of this enormous front men fight in the shelter of trenches excavated in the soil, and the generalissimo has almost no other share in operations than that of telephoning orders to attack or to strengthen the lines at certain points threatened by the enemy.

The earlier artillery, whose guns had an inaccurate range of no more than a few hundred yards, and did but little damage at that, is now replaced by cannons which carry from six to twelve and a half miles, and which are so powerful that in a few days they can utterly destroy fortresses which were formerly considered impregnable, and can almost instantly wipe out troops who are exposed to their fire.

The changes in naval warfare have been quite as great, for the use of submarines which can in a few minutes sink gigantic battleships that cost three millions sterling has, since the beginning of the war, forced the latter to take refuge in port and stay there.

In addition to this subterranean and submarine warfare there are dirigibles and aeroplanes, and although they have not as yet proved very destructive, they will probably play an exceedingly important part when fleets of military aircraft shall be in a position to fly over a country in their thousands.

There is a complete disappearance of the older

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type of battle which, from the days of Hannibal and Cæsar to those of Napoleon, was the personal work of a General. Upon the leader's manœuvres depended the success of the campaign; he saw everything, organized everything, and ordered everything; and in the time of Louis XIV or Napoleon an artist could depict a battlefield in a single picture, where one could see regiments battering one another with cannons at short range, and the General could be perceived as he directed operations from a hill near by.

At the present time the spectator may traverse a section of the front where a hundred thousand troops are in motion, without seeing a man or a gun; for soldiers, horses, artillery, and trenches are all alike hidden from view, and he might fancy himself in some lonely plain were it not for the howitzer shells whizzing through the air. If, however, he has a quick eye and watches for a long time, in the end he will sometimes see men, who can scarcely be distinguished from the ground, rising out of the earth, creeping slowly across the fields, and standing upright for just a moment before they leap down into a trench.

If our spectator wishes to meet the General who commands this invisible army, he will find him tucked away in some small and secret retreat, whence he will be sending his instructions to the different units under him, according to information which he has received by telegraph or telephone. His manœuvres are limited to transporting his troops by railway to the point which he desires to attack or defend.

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Last of all, if our imaginary spectator wants to find the officer who is in supreme command of all the troops, he will have a long road to travel. *L'Illustration* of September 18, 1915, told us that from September 5-25, 1914, or before, during and after the battle of the Marne, the Generalissimo and his Staff were at Châtillon-sur-Seine, 120 miles from the battlefield.

The decisive battles of former times have been succeeded by hundreds of small engagements, each following the other for months together. Enormous numbers of men are killed to secure a trifling advance ; but there have been no operations on a large scale except in Poland and Russia.

Even aside from the changes which I have just pointed out, this war has been productive of many surprises. For instance, all the schools for officers taught that infantry should advance in open order, for the sake of avoiding heavy losses of men ; but from the beginning of the war the Germans have, on the contrary, attacked in mass formation. The moral effect produced at Charleroi by the unexpected onslaught of these mighty avalanches of troops was tremendous ; but the method which proved successful at that place, because it was unlooked for, failed on the Yser, where the French and English simply made a target of the great masses which opposed them, and a target which was hit by every shot they fired. The result was that a hundred and fifty thousand Germans were killed within a few days.

Broadly speaking, French generals knew nothing whatever about the German methods, though all

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the military attachés might easily have observed them at the Grand Manœuvres. With regard to French military preparation as a whole General Malletierre, who is now on active service, writes as follows in the *Temps* of August 9, 1915:—

“Even during these last few years, when France roused herself from the torpor into which the morphiomaniacs of pacifism¹ had gradually sunk her, and finally saw the German peril clearly, the Eastern frontier and the supposition that a swift attack would be made via Alsace-Lorraine still hypnotized the military authorities.

“Germany showed the same power to conceive, organize, and carry out her plans in August 1914 that she had exhibited in August 1870.

“This explains the extraordinary astonishment of our troops when they first came in contact with the enemy and saw that they were being mowed down by projectiles which came from invisible positions that could not be reached by our artillery. The surprising thing about the German attack was that it preceded the advance of the infantry by veritable vanguards of howitzer shells of all calibres, storms of fire and iron, which brought our weakened lines to a halt and threw them back in disorder. All I know is what I saw myself and what others have told me; but I shall always remember the days we passed in stoical endurance of the howitzer shells, which caught us both when we kept our

¹ The situation is well summed up in the poet L. de la Soudière's couplet:—

Pacific confidence dwelt in us all,
For malefic words held the crowd in thrall.

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position and when we retreated, and never shall I forget the rage that gripped us because we could not cross the space which separated us from the German infantry.

"The two German offensives of 1870 and 1914 are both characterized by superiority in strategy, numbers, and *matériel*."

The Germans had indeed foreseen everything except the influence of certain psychological factors which are still unknown to their schools.

I shall now specify some of the most important technical points in which modern warfare has changed.

2. *Modern Tactics. Extension of the Front. The Offensive and Defensive.*

Modern warfare, which is made enormously complex by difficulties of supply, has been oddly simplified from a tactical point of view; for the great plans of former campaigns are now reduced to frontal attacks and vast movements tending to surround the enemy. The difficulty lies not only in manœuvring these hosts of men, but in transporting them from one place to another, and in supplying them with munitions and food. This is why railways are so vitally important. An army whose railway system is superior to that of its adversary has by this fact alone an overwhelming advantage over him, and can put him to rout even though its own troops are fewer in number, as is borne out by the Russian defeats. The Germans were enabled by their railway system to move their

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troops to points which they had chosen beforehand, and thus to defeat the enemy, for their very simple tactics were invariably successful. They conveyed a great number of army corps to one of the enemy's wings, turned it, surrounded it, and took many cannons and prisoners. "An army of a hundred thousand men, if taken on the flank, can be defeated by an army of thirty thousand men," said Frederick the Great long ago.

In spite of this obvious fact, the French General Staff was firmly persuaded, early in the war, that the Germans would themselves be invaded, in place of being able to penetrate into Russia. The very opposite happened, and even if the Russians had been victorious, they could never have moved to any great distance from their base, because they had not a sufficient transport service. If the Germans had retreated they would of course have destroyed the railways giving access to their territory. So that if the Russians had invaded Germany they would probably not have ventured very far into the interior.

The present enormous extension of the front is absolutely contrary to the old principle of concentrating troops at a single point, and prevents battles from being decisive. Modern battles are a series of small engagements spread over an immense extent of space, and they seldom lead to definite results.

The use of trenches has made a great change in the old ideas about the offensive and defensive.

From the psychological point of view it is obvious that the offensive has a pronounced advantage over the defensive ; for an adversary who is expecting

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an attack without knowing where it will take place is certainly in a position of inferiority. Ever since Napoleon's time this principle has been taught in all military textbooks, and it is, moreover, a fundamental doctrine of the German General Staff :—

“Bernhardi says : ‘It is always preferable to take the offensive, even when one is weaker in numbers,’ and ‘The enemy often allows himself to be disconcerted by a bold stroke, and one gets the advantage of him,’ wrote Frederick the Great to Louis XV.

“Frederick the Great conquered by bold offensive battles, and he did so because his enemies usually met him with a sluggish defensive, and as they were embarrassed by the rigid forms and principles of the military art of the period, they could not paralyse his bold manœuvres by suitable counter-attacks. Napoleon won his brilliant victories over the inadequate strategy and tactics of his adversaries, and in von Moltke's time the principle of surrounding the enemy was successful because his adversaries had discovered no counter-maœuvre.”

Trench warfare has not abolished these advantages, but it renders the offensive so deadly that a commanding officer hesitates to employ it on a vast scale, unless fundamentally important operations are involved. I have already mentioned the fact that when the Germans were hoping to take Calais and outflank the French army they made a useless sacrifice of a hundred and fifty thousand men, in the space of a few days, by their attempts to force the French trenches.

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This incidental superiority which the defensive possesses over the offensive must not, however, be taken as an absolute rule, for if there is an adequate supply of munitions the offensive may regain the advantage which it formerly had. A communiqué of the Russian General Staff for the month of June 1915 reads:—

“Generally speaking, our losses are not as severe during our offensive operations as when we are defending an intrenchment under the concentrated fire of heavy artillery. This was the case in our offensive against the village of Demenkalisma, west of Jidatchew, where we took a machine-gun and 629 Austrian prisoners, of whom nineteen were officers, and yet our losses were only fifty killed and wounded.”

Another curious fact is that the most successful leaders of the German Army are old men, unlike Napoleon's Generals. Leopold of Bavaria, Hindenburg (who had been retired for incompetency when in command of the Fourth Army Corps), Mackensen, and Below are septuagenarians, while Marshal von Haeseler is eighty years of age. They had all been placed on the retired list to make way for younger officers; but they had to be recalled. In the time of Napoleon quite young men defeated the old Generals of Europe, but the opposite is the case at present, and one may no doubt draw the conclusion that the qualities which insured success a century ago are not at all the same as those which do so now. It is certain that quite as much boldness is required as before, but more deliberation as well.

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3. *Forts and Trenches in Modern Warfare.*

The present war has entirely altered our ideas with regard to forts. There is no question about lack of foresight in this case, for experience alone could tell that if open cities such as Nancy were defended by improvised trenches they would succeed in withstanding the attacks of a numerous besieging army, while forts which were considered impregnable, like those of Antwerp, Liège, and Namur, would be reduced in a few days. This war will no doubt mark the end of permanent fortifications, since none of them have offered even a short resistance. The fort of Charlemont, near Givet, was attacked on the 29th of August from a distance of seven and a half miles, and was demolished in three days, during which time not one of the defenders' shots reached the enemy. The stronghold of Longwy fell similarly after six days' fighting, and Antwerp held out less than a fortnight. The Germans, of course, had not told any one that they possessed cannons which had a far greater range than that of those mounted in the Belgian and French forts, and which were capable of demolishing the supposedly indestructible metal cupolas of these works in three or four days.

The results of the present war demonstrate that forts merely immobilize soldiers who might otherwise be fighting, and that the shelter they offer is a snare and a delusion. Warsaw and Kovno seemed impregnable, for more than thirty forts surrounded the former, and Kovno, which covered the last

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line of the Russian retreat, had been provided with the most modern defensive appliances. Its artillery must have been very strong, for the Germans seized over four hundred cannons in the place.

While the present war has, however, closed the age of forts, it has inaugurated the era of trenches. A trench is simply a fort which is situated in the open country and which can be moved to another position if a part of it is captured or destroyed. Very few men are needed for its defence, but, nevertheless, it is far more formidable and less liable to damage than are the most scientifically constructed forts. It has often given the defensive an advantage over the offensive, for ten times more men and cannons are required to storm a line of trenches than to fight a battle in the open field.

One reason why trenches are so formidable is the fact that while one of them is being captured by a great expenditure of effort, the enemy can build several others behind it, and when the first one has been carried by assault the whole operation has to be gone over again.

The trench has not only put an end to the strategical manœuvres of former days, but to the great battles like Actium, Bouvines, Austerlitz, and Waterloo, which decided the fate of a nation, or at least of a campaign.

The novelty of trenches in modern warfare consists in their extent, importance, and the way in which they are fortified, but not in their use, for as a matter of fact there has never been a time when they have not been employed. Formerly strongholds were always invested by means of

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trenches dug parallel to the fortifications and hence called parallels. At the time of the siege of Arras in 1640, Marshal de Chaulnes availed himself of them, and they were also employed during the siege of Dunkirk in 1658.

Long ago trenches were used not only for attack but also for defence. It is a well-known fact that Wellington forced Masséna to retreat by encircling the approaches to Lisbon with a double line of trenches which he cut at Torres-Vedras, and of which the first was thirty miles long and the second lay seven and a half miles behind it. The trenches themselves were five and a half yards in breadth, and it took twenty-five thousand men a month to dig them. Koutouzoff also protected himself by trenches at Borodino, and they have been used in many modern wars as well, especially in those of the Transvaal and Japan.

We did not utilize trenches at the beginning of the campaign to defend France from invasion, although the military textbooks taught their importance. I may mention in this connection that they were referred to in the instructions on field-works for infantry, issued on October 24, 1906, and modified on October 28, 1911, and that these instructions even contained designs for several different types of trenches, both open to the air and covered in.

The first novelty in trench warfare at the present time is the employment of heavy artillery, which makes the trenches real forts, and, secondly, the fact that the trenches themselves are carried to a length of three or four hundred miles. This elonga-

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tion is an improvised measure, which was occasioned by a temporary necessity after the battle of the Marne, when the French and Germans were endeavouring to outflank one another without exposing themselves to the enemy's artillery. The only adequate shelter they could find was in the trenches, which were accordingly dug along the whole extent of the Front until the armies which faced one another were stopped by the sea. Over three hundred miles of underground shelters were thus constructed within a few weeks.

To endure life in the trenches for months together requires untiring patience and courage, for the men who defend these subterranean habitations are exposed to howitzer fire as well as to the explosion of enemy mines laid beneath their feet. The following is a description of the trenches given by a military writer who has inspected them :—

“ Imagine a ditch which is deep enough to conceal a full-grown man when standing upright and broad enough to accommodate two men, one in front of the other. At the bottom is a platform upon which the soldier stands to fire, recesses are hollowed out in the walls for the reception of his kit and cartridges, and at one end are steps which are cut in the earth and permit of easy entrance and egress. The length of a trench varies indefinitely according to the ground.

“ A howitzer shell falling into a trench may kill all the men in it, and for this reason splinter-screens have been invented. They are earthen walls which are thick enough to withstand the splinters of the shells, and they divide the trench into a certain

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number of communicating compartments, the protecting wall in each case closing only part of the trench and leaving a space through which a man can walk. Seen from above the trench is like a rake, of which the splinter-screens are the teeth, and the spaces between one tooth and the next are each capable of holding three or four sharpshooters. When the ground permits, a much larger room is hollowed out at one end of the trench, or behind it, and here the men who are off duty can rest and take refreshment. This room is roofed with thick planks upon which are placed boughs and earth, and the ground is covered with straw. The trenches are often connected by corridors. Hundreds and thousands of men go back and forth in these burrows, and by this underground warfare each army strives to attack the other."

It is very dangerous to capture a trench, but to defend it afterwards is sometimes even more perilous, for as a matter of fact it is usually more or less demolished by the howitzer shells and must be repaired under the enemy's fire. An artilleryman says:—

"I remember an attack during which the artillery work had been so thorough that two battalions of chasseurs who were ordered to charge the position lost only eighty men and took just thirteen minutes to capture the line of trenches which they had been told to seize. But in order to keep it they were afterwards obliged to repulse *eleven counter-attacks*. They succeeded in holding it, but it cost them six days and nights of constant fighting and they lost fifteen hundred of their men."

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It must be acknowledged that trenches are not really impregnable unless they are properly constructed and well defended. They were of little use to the Russians,¹ who were unable to stop the German advance and therefore resorted to the somewhat barbarous expedient of burning their own cities.

The *Temps* of September 3, 1915, gives the following account of the systematic way in which the Russians laid their country waste, in order to put a temporary stop to the enemy's advance:—

“A great sea of flame marks the line of retreat. Burning houses border the roadside for miles and miles.

“Every street in Krylof was burning when the Hungarian honveds entered the city, which was glowing like a gigantic brazier, so that they could not pass through the place, but had to go around it. When they reached Vladimir-Volinski it was burning too, and from there they could see the town of Verba, which was also in flames, and beyond it all the villages were burning. The whole

¹ Experience soon taught the French Generals that fortresses could be defended only by removing the cannons to trenches situated well to the front of them; but now that this fact is realized, such important forts as Verdun, and even unfortified cities like Nancy, are able to withstand the Germans.

This principle was not understood by the Russians. The military critic of the Russian paper *Rietch* gives the inadequacy of their trenches as the cause of the fall of all their important fortresses: Brest-Litovsk, Novo-Georgievsk, Kovno, Grodno, and so forth. The same newspaper says that it was owing to their army's lack of technical experts that the Russians were unable to construct proper trenches which would have saved them from invasion. Incapacity, however, is always a poor excuse.

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plain of Kovel was a sea of rolling flames and its surrounding villages were all burning.

"The inhabitants who had not been swept away by the Russian retreat were dumb with fright and horror."

It was not only villages that were fired, but large cities like Brest-Litovsk, which had a population of forty thousand, and of which nothing is left but its blackened walls. The Russians burnt everything in their retreat. They seem to have paid rather dearly for the privilege of stopping the Germans for a few hours.

4. *Artillery and Munitions.*

When the war broke out it was generally supposed that numbers would be the preponderant factor in the fray; but we are now forced to conclude that the amount of munitions available is of far greater importance; for we realize that lack of munitions is one reason why the Russians have been defeated so often, although they are superior to their adversaries in numbers. It requires an avalanche of howitzer shells to take a trench which is defended by cannons and by machine-guns that fire six hundred shots per minute, and an English General says very truly that a trench can be held against a brigade by two men and a couple of machine-guns.

It was a long time before the enormous importance of the quantitative factor in munitions was realized; for, although it is obvious enough now, the idea took more than six months of war-

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fare to make its way in France, England, and Russia, and immense numbers of men were lost because it was not perceived in time.

When the war broke out there was not one French General who had grasped the fact that howitzer shells must be manufactured upon a large scale, and the mobilization plans called for a daily output of thirteen thousand as more than the necessary maximum. In the month of September 1914 the factories were turning out less than seven thousand, while in May 1915 they were giving us more than eighty thousand daily for the "seventy-five" guns alone, and even this amount is now admitted to be quite inadequate.

So little did the French General Staff suspect the importance of an abundant supply of munitions that the Minister of War sent most of the workmen in the arsenals to the Front when war was declared, and each one of them had subsequently to be weeded out of the regiments, by which slow process a whole month was lost. To-day we know from experience that a few men and a large quantity of munitions are infinitely more valuable than many men and few munitions.

5. Numbers as a Factor in Warfare.

An abundant supply of munitions is the preponderant factor in modern warfare, but numerical superiority is very important too. The Germans have always laid great stress upon its influence, though they have been careful to show its limitations. The following is Bernhardt's opinion:—

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"We must never forget that moral and intellectual factors are always dominant, and that within certain very variable limits they are stronger than the numerical factor. This is so true that in certain cases the moral forces alone will very nearly counterbalance all other deficiencies, and the influence of a single outstanding personality will raise to a considerable degree the general capacity of whole armies and even of nations. . . . When two adversaries in an uncertain contest are equally balanced, the level of the *useful effect* of them both is gradually lowered, and success will ultimately reward that side which shall have shown the highest moral worth and the greatest spirit of sacrifice. If the moral resources are equal in both cases, that side which is able to keep up the financial struggle for the longest time will be the victor."

The steadiness of the troops therefore takes precedence of the numerical factor. The same author writes :—

"The masses of soldiers levied by the French Republic in 1870 and 1871, though far superior in numbers, were shattered by the stout Prussian battalions ; and in spite of the fact that the Japanese were numerically very inferior to the enemy, as is well known, they gained constant victories over the Russians, who greatly outnumbered them. The American Civil War is highly instructive in this connection ; for the Union army, which was superior in numbers, always succumbed to the steadiness of the Confederate troops."

Nevertheless, there must not be too great dis-

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parity between the opposing forces, or numbers will inevitably win.

“Theory and experience both show that even genius is powerless when confronted by a certain proportion of numerical superiority, and that sufficiently large masses, if they can act as such, will annihilate any intellectual and moral superiority whatsoever. Genius, therefore, can counterbalance the advantage of numbers to only a limited extent, for when numerical superiority reaches a certain point it exerts a sort of influence that is overwhelming.”

The armies engaged in the European War contain an enormous number of men, because they represent the whole able-bodied population of the various States. Several military writers estimate that Germany has nine million soldiers under arms. There is no need to say that such vast quantities of fighting men have never been seen at any period in history, for the present war, in which whole nations, and not mere armies, are at grips, is unprecedented in the annals of mankind.

At the beginning of the campaign the Germans sustained immense losses by their shock tactics and mass formation; but since their defeat at the battle of the Marne they have adopted what are called defensive-offensive tactics, by which method the attack is awaited in a well-chosen defensive position, and a counter-attack is made as soon as the enemy's effort shows signs of having weakened him. This system has been followed since the battle of the Marne, but has not given any good results, because the armies engaged are of almost

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equal strength. No change will be possible until there comes a time when one of them acquires an advantage over the other in troops, artillery, and generalship, and can open a breach several miles long in the enemy's front. The line will then be pierced at a given point, and the whole defensive will probably collapse at the same blow.

6. Naval and Aerial Warfare.

Naval warfare bids fair to undergo even greater developments than land warfare; for, as a matter of fact, naval engagements have an increasing tendency to be fought under the sea and not on it, and whether the great battleship, which costs about four millions sterling, and which may be sunk in a few minutes by a mine or by a torpedo from a submarine, is a type that will continue to be employed in the future is a question.

Submarines have a twofold share in naval warfare, for they do material damage by the destruction which they cause, and they also produce a psychological effect by means of the fear which they inspire. It is the latter influence which has forced the largest battleships to take shelter in port and not come out again.

If Germany had had enough submarines she could have established an effective blockade of England, but expert opinion has up to now favoured the large battleship and considered the submarine as a subordinate factor. There was nothing to justify this preference, for the future importance of the submarine had been foreseen. Lord Fisher,

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who was First Sea Lord of the British Admiralty in 1905, said that the submarine would bring about a revolution in naval warfare, and a few weeks before the war Admiral Sir Percy Scott wrote that the introduction of submarines had made surface craft worthless. "The submarine," said he, "will drive the battleship from the sea as the motor-car has driven the horse from the road."

An Italian, who was formerly a chief engineer of naval construction, has proposed to change the submarine into a combination of battleship and destroyer, which would navigate under water and show nothing above the surface but two armoured structures containing its funnels, motors, and cannons. Only the upper part of the hull would be armoured, as the density of the water in which the craft would be submerged would suffice to protect it against shells.

We may look forward to many other changes when we consider the state of unstable equilibrium into which modern civilization has entered through the swift progress of science.

CHAPTER II

FEELINGS AROUSED BY THE WAR. EMERGENCE OF NEW PERSONALITIES

1. *The Emergence of New Personalities*

A PROLONGED war, like the one which is causing the present upheaval in Europe, is one of those fundamental events that have the power to alter the equilibrium of the elements which compose our mental life. Hence result those variations of personality which I have mentioned in another chapter, and which bring about such a change in a given individual that his conduct surprises his acquaintances, and will even astonish the man himself when he is afterwards put back in his old environment and attempts to resume his former personality.

Changes of this sort come about as instantaneously as the events which produce them. At a time when luxury and love of comfort seemed to have made a life of danger and privation an impossibility, hundreds of thousands of men, who were in no wise prepared to confront the daily menace of a terrible death, have become as brave as the most famous warriors of olden days. Heroism is a commonplace to them, and when one reads the list of those mentioned in dispatches

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one sees that persons whose callings in civil life are all that is peaceful give proof of boundless intrepidity upon the field of battle.

The present war is, therefore, one more justification of the theory already presented in my other books, that the apparent persistence of personality simply results from persistence of environment. The man whom we know in every-day life may change until he is unrecognizable, for each one of us has various possibilities of character which emerge in different ways under the pressure of circumstances. Therefore nobody can maintain that he knows himself.

All spectators are impressed with the profound changes in mentality exhibited by members of the various social classes which make up the army, and as one of them says :—

“ A peculiar mentality has developed among our soldiers, whom circumstances often carry to heroic heights. They sacrifice themselves willingly, are unselfish and filled with enthusiasm, but unnecessary talk is repugnant to them. Gabblers are not tolerated in the firing-line, for the Frenchman is no longer to be caught with fair words. But to make up for this there is so much solidarity between the men that when some dangerous surprise attack is ordered there is no need to ask for volunteers, since every one is ready to offer himself. Duty and warfare have ennobled every soldier. An officer of my acquaintance was once a Trappist, and the men whom he commands were not at all well behaved in Paris, but they are excellent soldiers now, and in the eyes of their comrades their past

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errors are already redeemed " (*Le Temps*, July 27, 1915).

This new mentality implies the development of certain feelings, the chief of which I shall now point out.

2. *Exaltation of Patriotism. Influence exerted by the Spirit of the Race.*

Love of one's country, or patriotism, necessitates the complete sacrifice of personal interest to the general interest. As the spirit of the race becomes increasingly stabilized by centuries of life and interests in common, patriotism grows stronger, for the instinct of collective conservation is then easily substituted for that of individual conservation.

The spirit of the race is the real combatant in war, and the more its existence is threatened the more vigorously it defends itself. Patriotism is an inherited quality of a mystic, not of a rational, nature, for any one who is a patriot by virtue of reason alone is a poor patriot, and his patriotism does not last long. As M. Chevrillon says:—

"Patriotism, like religion and morality, is a matter, not of reason but of life. It is an instinct, one of those hereditary systems of illusions and emotions built up during the course of its evolution by life, as it strives to attain its eternal aim of perpetuating or perfecting the forms under which it manifests itself. Some of these systems subserve the conservation of the individual, others that of the group, and still others that of the species; but all of them are more or less directly concerned

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with the one and only essential object, which is the preservation of the type. This is why there is nothing in the argument which shows a man that it is foolish to sacrifice himself for something of which he will be unconscious after his death ; for those who reason thus start from a false premise, by supposing that only the individual has existence, that he is restricted to himself, and that his usefulness and the end and aim of his being are in himself ; while, on the contrary, just as a leaf lives by and for its parent tree, so man lives by his group and for his group, and a part—no doubt the principal part—of himself is not individual but social. Considered from this point of view, patriotism is logical. It is not an error nor a miscalculation on the part of an individual when he sacrifices himself to something that is not himself ; but it is a function of the collective life working in the individual for the collective life, like love and the life of the race. It is a function which is latent in ordinary times, but like love it, too, may suddenly awaken."

Patriotism, the heritage of the dead, is one of those supreme forces which are created by long ancestral accumulations, and whose strength is revealed at critical moments. It was patriotism which rallied to its banner on the very day war was declared the Pacifists, Syndicalists, Socialists, and others who belonged to parties that were apparently most refractory to its influence ; nor could their unanimous support have been won had patriotism not been an unconscious force whose impetus swept every argument aside.

Many small things show the amazing influence

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of this sentiment. One of the most typical incidents is that of the soldier who deserted in 1899 and set up as a farmer at Carlsruhe, where he married a German woman, by whom he had six children. His dislike for military service must have been very great, since he had not hesitated to desert in order to escape it; but when the war broke out the call of the blood was so strong and overmastering that he left his new family and came back to fight in France.

Many similar cases might be mentioned, but the most touching of all is, perhaps, that of a Councillor of State and former Préfet, who enlisted as a common soldier at the age of sixty, and was at last killed by a splinter from a howitzer shell.

3. Rashness and Love of Danger.

Love of danger is a part of human nature, and reveals itself in various ways, such as gambling, hunting dangerous game, fighting, exploring, and so forth.

No conqueror or founder of imperial power has ever won success until he has staked his fortune more than once at Destiny's gaming-tables, for "nothing risked, nothing gained" is especially true with regard to battles. The chance of success must, however, not be too much smaller than the chance of failure, and therefore one must have a clear idea of possibilities.

Bismarck defied many risks to bring about the unification of Germany. Other men would have hesitated to attack Austria, who was considered

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very powerful, and after her France, who was so strong that she had defeated Austria in Italy.

To run a risk which is based upon a slender chance of success is rashness. This is a form of courage which is both unprofitable and dangerous, and which has cost us thousands of men in the present war. The following was written me on this subject by M. de B——, an artillery officer, other of whose interesting remarks from the Front I shall have occasion to quote farther on:—

“ There is a world of difference between bravery and rashness, which latter ought to be absolutely forbidden and punished, since it is responsible for the fact that we have had whole regiments deprived of officers. The inexorable method of the Germans no doubt makes them realize this, and accounts for the fact that they almost never display those deeds which seem heroic and of which we are so proud, but which are often disastrous to us, because they denude us of our best men, and we are left with a force whose value is greatly diminished.”

4. Revival of Religious Feeling in France during the War.

In France the war has brought about mystic manifestations which are very unlike those that have resulted from the political mysticism of Germany.

In the mystic ideal of domination peculiar to the Germans, God, embodied in the person of the Emperor, keeps His distance from mundane affairs, as though He need trouble Himself no more about

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the German race now that He has chosen it to regenerate the world, and has given it all the good qualities necessary to that end.

The German mystic is sure of his God's sheltering power, and does not feel the need of imploring it; but the French mystic is less certain of this protection, and consequently endeavours to obtain it by repeated prayers, which he deems the more necessary because he is convinced, according to the explanation published in one of the great newspapers by an eminent Academician, that:—

“The calamity which has befallen the nation is an expiation for our sins. There is a meaning in this cataclysm, and all religious sects are unanimous in recognizing an expiation in the calamity of the nation.”

This author thought that the best way in which to appease the fury of his vindictive god was to address public prayers to him, and the Government was therefore petitioned to give its consent that this should be done. The request was, of course, refused, for a god who can be touched only by abject supplications has a mentality which is rather too barbarous for our modern minds. Nevertheless this deity appears to have intervened in recent battles, according to some distinguished warriors, for General Cherfils writes in the *Gaulois* of December 26, 1914:—

“It is easy to understand why the plans of Almighty Providence have not permitted the war to be as swift and destructive as we had anticipated; for this war must be the deliverance and resurrection of the Eldest Daughter of the Church,

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and resurrection implies the grave. Only in place of the grave of Lazarus, God has given us the pallet of Job, the long, grievous, and bloody affliction in which the soul of Christian France will be regenerated. This is the truest explanation of the length of the war, and it is the truest one because it is supernatural. Since the time of Joan of Arc it has never been more manifest that the supernatural governs the universe."

There is no doubt that the mystic spirit is a great source of strength to true believers ; but it sometimes suggests strange explanations to them !

The revival of religious feeling has been undoubted at the Front, but in the rest of France it has been much less evident. The Pope's hostility and that of the Catholic parties in certain neutral countries, as well as the blunders of the clergy, who affirmed that the French reverses were a chastisement from Heaven, have deeply offended the patriotism of the nation, and have created a general coolness towards Catholicism.

5. Development of Popular Feeling during the War.

It is difficult to speak about the development of popular feeling during the war, for although there are evident changes of feeling and thought in every social stratum, the forms which they will ultimately assume are still unknown.

Whether the struggle is to stop or be carried on will be decided in great part by the development of public opinion in the different countries involved,

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for what things really are is a much less important matter than what one thinks about them, and he who believes in his own defeat will soon see it come to pass. At present the world is ruled by collective concepts, whose formation is slow, but whose force is irresistible when they have acquired their full growth. This is why Germany has made so many efforts to win public opinion ; but she has distorted the truth so often that people could not continue to believe in her statements. Her mystic conviction of her triumph has not weakened yet, however, nor will it do so until she feels that the God of Battles is forsaking her.

One may as well abandon the attempt to find out the real feeling in the different countries, for the Press tells only what the various Governments permit, except, perhaps, in England. I give the following quotation from a Hungarian newspaper, however, simply as a curious document, and not with the idea of attaching any particular importance to it :—

“ Three different phases of popular feeling have made their appearance during the eight months of this horrible war.

“ The first was that of an overflowing enthusiasm which filled the souls of all.

“ Then the temper of the people changed, and public opinion grew rather apathetic with regard to the war ; victories did not exhilarate any one, but neither did defeats cause any agitation.

“ We have now reached the third phase of popular feeling, and an extreme form of nervous irritation has succeeded to the earlier indifference.

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It is a great reaction. The feelings respond to every excitation, and are affected by the slightest incident. Never has the grief of the people been more profound, never has sorrow for the dead been more heartrending, and never have events so moved the crowd. It is more than nervous irritation ; it is almost a pathological phenomenon " (*Magyar Orzag*, April 4, 1915).

This and the following chapter will help to show how greatly our old ideas about the fixity of personality must be modified. The aggregate of equilibria of which personality is composed owes its stability, as I must say once more, merely to social environment and the necessities of every-day life. The ancestral influences accumulated by heredity form a fairly fixed psychological kernel, but unexpected circumstances may invest this kernel with new equilibria, which change the personality and transform the individual into a stranger who astonishes his contemporaries and puzzles posterity.

CHAPTER III

MILITARY COURAGE: ITS GENESIS AND ITS FORMS

1. *The Various Forms of Courage*

LIFE is a precious possession to man, but he readily sacrifices it under certain circumstances, especially in obedience to ancestral impulses which are stronger than the instinct of self-preservation.

Courage is resistance to the natural fear of danger. It is compounded of various elements which make up a complex whole that appears under different aspects. It may be accidental, and in that case is comparatively easy to practise; but when it assumes a continuous form it is a more difficult matter, except when habit makes it almost unconscious.

The European War gives us the opportunity of making a great many very interesting psychological reflections on the subject of courage, for the observations recorded on the various battlefields are most instructive. Among the letters which I have received from the Front, I have selected the following one, written by M. de B—, the artillery officer whom I have already quoted:—

“With regard to gallantry the war has made me distinguish a whole great gamut of qualities which

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I had before lumped together in more or less confusion.

"In the first place I have come to realize the truth of the Spanish expression which says of a man, 'He was brave on such and such a day.'

"The most admirable quality in gallantry is that which impels a man to leave a place of safety, although he is not under the excitement of battle, and to plunge with cool calculation into some danger which he knows and has estimated to its full extent.

"True courage is prudent and limits itself strictly to what is necessary; nor does it ever bluster, unless men are wavering and have to be carried along by the force of example.

"The courage of one and the same body of men is all or nothing according to circumstances, a fact which is especially true for the very suggestible French temperament. A body of Germans would certainly vary less in this respect.

"The men's confidence in their officers is a most important factor, for the very same soldiers will succeed or fail under identical circumstances, simply according to the way they are led."

French military courage has changed greatly since the beginning of the war, and has necessarily lost its hasty and impulsive character, which cost us so many men. The soldiers were at first entirely under the influence of the obsolete methods which the General Staff had never modified, and hence they exposed themselves to the adversary's fire and flung themselves insanely upon enemy batteries that

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let them approach and mowed them down without suffering any loss in turn. Such tactics, of course, soon led to disastrous defeat, and contributed to the success of the Germans quite as much as did the incapacity of French generalship.

A German General emphasizes this point in an interview which was published by the *Figaro* of October 5, 1914:—

“Your infantry deserves great praise, but it has serious, nay terrible, defects, of which the most dangerous is its courage. Your foot-soldiers expose themselves without protection, and seem to take a delight in making targets of themselves. It is an easy matter to aim at them and to hit them. Of course it is heroic, but it is preposterous.

“You think that courage is always advantageous, and so it is in cases like the storming of fortified places or bayonet charges. But too much courage in soldiers is more often a nuisance than an advantage. You do not realize this, but it is true, nevertheless. You do not seem to know that if you want to conquer you must conceal yourself, disguise your approach, expose yourself to the enemy as little as may be, dig a hole in the ground and lie snug in it, make use of every rock and recess in the countryside, see the enemy and not be seen by him.

“Perhaps you will learn all this some day by seeing us do it. You must run every risk in battle, but none outside it.”

The soldiers have finally learned from experience what their officers had forgotten to teach them in time of peace. The change which has taken place

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is summed up in the following lines written by a French officer, and published in the *Eclair* of November 29, 1914:—

“Our idea of courage has changed. It has not lessened, but it has become more modest, more reserved, more humble, in a word, more moral. There was something brilliant and aristocratic about the old form of courage. The men who were brave stepped out from the ranks and were distinguished in the eyes of every one. From the first moment they were seen to be the flower of the army, and there were visible signs to show that they were an exception to the general rule. But where there is no crowd there can be no exception, and in the trenches there are only one's two neighbours to be impressed by one's courage, and that is as much as to say, nobody. Trench courage is unaccompanied by fame, is indeed often unconscious of itself, and has no longer any spectacular element. It consists almost entirely in keeping cool and in giving brain and will free play for the performance of their functions. Those who have lived through the battles of Ypres will find glory enough in the fact that they are neither madmen nor candidates for the madhouse.

“This is the glory that we have won hitherto, and it is not the reflected light of a few individuals who are privileged by character or circumstances, but a result of qualities which are shared by our whole race.”

These words show us very clearly that intermittent, heedless gallantry has given way to continuous, deliberate, and consequently prudent

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courage, a form of fearlessness which is far more useful at the present time.

Facts observed under fire are always particularly interesting. The following were communicated to me by Dr. Jolivot, and give a good idea of the influence exerted by officers :—

“ Under the effect of the emotion excited by heavy firing the soldier becomes very much like a bolting horse, except that he follows his officer blindly ; but if the latter disappears the men soon go to pieces. In the Argonne I saw a company put to rout at the first attack, while the rest of the regiment, which was fully officered, continued steadily in action. The men may be pulled together again, but unless the officers' voices and actions show confidence the result will be *nil*, for the soldiers will throw away their guns and knapsacks, which are their most valuable possessions, and a company of them will turn into a rabble.”

2. *Heroism.*

The cruel and sanguinary conditions of modern warfare were certain to produce either defeat or heroism. Fortunately their result is heroism, which has indeed become so general that it may be considered an elementary quality. A glance at the long list of names mentioned in *Orders of the Day* leaves no doubt on this score, for actions like the following, which I have selected at random, are only types of thousands of other similar ones :—

“ The Reservist Courtin, of the 126th Infantry, first killed all the men who were working a machine-gun, and then leaped alone into a trench which was

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defended by twenty Germans, whom he killed by shooting some and bayoneting the rest.

"Cheylard, a non-commissioned officer of the 3rd Zouaves, was sent with three men to reconnoitre the enemy's position on the night of October 8, 1914. He found forty Germans hidden behind a hedge, killed eighteen of them and put the others to flight.

"Corporal Leboucq, of the 4th Cuirassiers, although he was quite alone, took a Captain and twenty-three Würtemberg soldiers prisoners by his coolness and intrepidity.

"Mathieu Jouy, a sailor, who was left alone and had only a few sandbags for protection, defended a trench against about a hundred assailants, in order to cover the retreat of his comrades, and although one of his arms was paralysed by a bayonet-thrust, held off the enemy and rejoined his company.

"Arthur Fleury, of the 319th Territorial Infantry, killed four Germans single-handed, captured eight, and put three others to flight. He was twice wounded and sent to the rear, but returned to his company of his own accord, although not fully cured."

Feats of gallantry like these are innumerable among soldiers of every social class, for there is no caste in heroism. They are, however, examples of intermittent heroism, while the conditions of trench life in the present war make continuous heroism indispensable, and call for a display of valour such as is shown by the following extracts taken from various published sources.

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In a passage from the *Eclair* of November 29, 1914, an officer who lived in the trenches at the battle of Ypres says:—

“On the evening of the 24th we were suddenly sent to a trench in the firing-line near Ypres, and there we stayed underground for thirteen nights and twelve days—I was wounded on the thirteenth day. We were covered with mud, drenched by fog at night and numb from sitting still, while the furious hail of bullets, shrapnel, and howitzer shells never stopped either day or night for so much as a quarter of an hour.

“. . . It was good-bye to all our dreams of theatrical heroism, sweeping charges, and bayonets reddened with the blood of the hated enemy. Instead of all this we were choked with the smoke of bursting shells, were deafened by their din, buried under their fragments, heard the cries of the wounded, though powerless to move to their aid, were hit in the face by one comrade's brains, saw the arm of another fly into space, picked up a third whose feet were crushed, and carried off a fourth with a shattered chest. All this we had to see and hear, and though we might shudder, we must not quail. We had stolen a march upon the fate which would one day lay us in our graves, for we were buried alive and a prey to nightmare dreams of infernal torments.”

M. Léon Bourgeois sums up the life of the trenches as follows:—

“Their feet are in ice-cold water, and they suffer silently in the black darkness, listening to the faintest murmurs of the night, never sleeping, their

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hands grasping their rifles, as they stand ready to fight or to die. One night follows another, and for hundreds of miles there they are, vigilant, impassive, not to be moved. Their officers are close beside them, and they too are silent; but when the fight is on they do not even see their officers, whose distant orders reach them by telephone. The bullets whistle, the shells burst with a sudden roar, and formidable engines of destruction fall upon the trench, overwhelming it. When the storm is past they close their ranks and count those who are left. Without an instant's hesitation or confusion the untiring, silent guard takes up its burden again, and the officers do the same.

"And when the *Army Bulletin* of the following day describes the engagement in which so and so many yards of ground have been gained, summing up the whole heroic struggle in a few frank and simple words, no one will tell us the name of the battalion, or the regiment, or the officers who led their soldiers to victory. From the highest to the lowest, not one man of them all has had a thought for glory, that marvel which in days of yore seemed the necessary parent of valour's miracles."

3. *Influence of Habit upon Courage.*

Habit plays a preponderant part in the genesis of the continuous courage which is made necessary by modern warfare, and which is formed by repeated experience of the same dangers, and the individual's ability to resist the first occurrence of them. At this stage the soldier advances from discontinuous courage to continuous courage.

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We must not exaggerate the asperities of the trench life which I have been describing, for it is hard only when one takes an abrupt view of it and leaves habit out of account. A man who always lives in the sunlight looks upon life in a mine, with the constant danger of explosions, as something infernal, and would feel that he was leaving Paradise to go to Hades if he were forced to forsake the sunny, open country for a dark cavern where creeping is the only method of progression. And yet old miners who have retired from their occupation regret their former life under ground, for to them it is Paradise, and existence in the light of the sun is Hades.

It is by force of habit that the soldiers in the trenches are cheerful and show no evidence of fatigue. Custom has stamped its powerful impress upon them, and when they return to the factory, the field, or the office, more than one of them will perhaps regret the deadly trenches.

M. E. Herriot makes the following pertinent remarks upon the cheerfulness of life in the trenches :—

“ In these muddy ditches, carpeted with wet straw, where our soldiers live, they truly attain the maximum limit of human suffering, of the misery which is entailed by privation and icy cold, of strain which continues day after day, and of distress which knows no end. But it must be confessed that one's ideas of a thing are perhaps sometimes worse than the thing itself, and besides, one grows accustomed to anything. I never heard a single complaint, and it was not from bashfulness, for these soldiers of

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ours are not bashful in the least. And I not only did not hear any complaints, but, although the conditions of life were as hard as they could possibly be, I saw none save cheerful men, whose cheerfulness was drawn from the deepest wellsprings of the national temperament, and was compounded of confidence, optimism, and determination."

We must remember these last words about cheerfulness, for it is the chief prop and stay of the trench-dweller, and the officers, who know how important it is, cultivate it in various ways. In any case, one soon grows accustomed to the fearful life, as a soldier who has spent a long time under similar conditions says:—

"It is not so very difficult to make a *poilu*. It takes no more than a week at the most, for at the end of that time the soldier is so accustomed to the infernal tumult of the bombardment that if by chance the cannonade is interrupted he is literally deafened by the silence. He sleeps with the sound of the shells in his ears; but the lack of it wakens him, as we notice every day. This means that the habit is formed. Since the beginning of the campaign it has taken place with unexpected rapidity."

All the letters received from soldiers at the Front indicate how quickly they become accustomed to their new lives. The following shows the part which is played by habit, as well as the ease with which the French soldier adapts himself to conditions of strife that are quite contrary to his atavistic mentality:—

"Nothing dismays me now; no matter how the

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shells and bullets may whistle I do not lose my composure as I did in the beginning ; and it is the same with all of us. When the first battles took place we engaged too soon ; for the bayonet charge was all we thought of, and by making too much haste we got ourselves shot. But now we crawl on our stomachs when we attack, and we use the tiniest clod of earth as cover, so that we fire upon the Germans as we like, and sometimes they do not even know where the shots come from. The last time we went into action we had an almost untenable position, and had to repel flank and frontal attacks at the same time ; but not one of us flinched."

It is not the place here to examine the psychological causes of habit, which is a consequence of the capacity for adaptation. No habit can be formed by a being which cannot adapt itself.

According to its duration, habit sets up temporary or permanent reflexes which act spontaneously, as is well illustrated by the following report of an officer who was exposed to a surprise attack at night :—

"What a precious possession is the automatism of professional training. A few seconds before I had been dreaming, a mere plaything of the night ; but now I stood facing my men, and under their eyes I felt penetrated by some strange force. At once I became the composed officer, who is master of himself, sure that his orders are right, confident of his knowledge, and inspiring the weak by his determination."

Courage which comes from habit is shown only

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in cases where the danger is of a kind known before, and repeated under analogous circumstances. This phenomenon has often been observed. For instance, soldiers who are usually fired upon with certain kinds of howitzer shells pay no attention to them, but if the projectiles are changed, are quite upset, and must form a new habit to overcome the resulting agitation.

The share of habit in the genesis of continuous courage is sufficiently proved by the facts which I have just stated. In war no less than in peace three-quarters of our actions are controlled by habit.

The habit which creates continuous courage has, however, no effect upon unforeseen dangers, so that the courage which confronts such perils is obviously due to something else. This latter form of courage implies a strong will, and consequently a sort of nervous tension, which is not easy to prolong. At this point the officers take the leading part.

4. Influence of Mental Contagion.

Mental contagion, which is a very powerful factor in social life, is a still greater one in the existence of the soldier, for it alone produces that group-cohesion without which no military action is possible.

As is well known, mental contagion is a psychological phenomenon which makes individuals who are subjected to its influence act according to the wills of those who surround them, and not according to their own wills. It has little influence on

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the intellect, but a great deal on the feelings, for under the sway of its suggestions all men in crowds feel and react in the same way.

Many of the mental states which are derived from various associations of feelings, such as optimism, pessimism, fear, courage, and so forth, may become contagious, and so may ideas occasionally, but only in proportion to their affective or mystic content, for a purely rational idea is never contagious.

Mental contagion operates upon an individual when he joins an assemblage which has a well-defined professional character, such as a military body, for instance. The spirit of the collectivity is then superposed upon his personality, and he feels, thinks, and forms opinions according to the ideas of his group and not according to the feelings, thoughts, and opinions which he usually entertains as an individual.

Captain Tabureau writes :—

“ By some astounding miracle, when the reservist puts on his uniform his state of mind suddenly changes, his feeling of individuality weakens, and he acquires the new sense of the collective life. He is no longer a grocer, a blacksmith, or a farmer, but a part of the machine. His personal ideas disappear and some mysterious force impels him to think and act like all the others. If he hears people around him saying, ‘ The enemy is in a bad way, we’ll finish him at a bite,’ he is sure that his adversary is a weak, ridiculous creature, altogether to be despised ; but if his neighbour tells him the awful secret, ‘ We are betrayed,’ he is

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equally certain that all his officers have sold him to the foe.

"If there comes a shout of 'Every man for himself,' when our soldier is feeling the strong emotions of the battlefield, all his sensible ideas are swept clean out of him, and he takes to his heels like a madman, without a moment's thought and without paying the slightest attention to whether the danger is real or not."

The spread of rumours, opinions, and the like is rendered very perilous by mental contagion, especially when defeat has weakened an army's moral tone, as is shown by the following letter from the artillery officer whom I have already quoted:—

"Only a few days after the beginning of the campaign I was struck by an incident which confirmed the correctness of your ideas. It was on the 20th of August at Sarrebourg. A mere rumour about the enemy's artillery having such a long range that we could not protect ourselves from it had changed a body of men, who had been most enthusiastic a few hours before, into an irresolute rabble. The artillery alone held its ground in the general demoralization. Suddenly a shell hit my horse and I was thrown into a mine-crater. I do not know why I thought of you, but in the half-conscious state in which I was left by the shock I realized that those soldiers had been paralysed by mental contagion, while we artillerymen could not feel its influence, because we did not belong to their crowd. Five days afterwards the same men, who had been roused by the example of some companies which had kept their nerve, and by the

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rumour of victories which were supposed to have taken place in the north, made a splendid effort. The irresolute rabble had become a powerful weapon once more."

The same officer called my attention to the fact that soldiers regain their military value when they are able to rejoin the companies to which they have previously belonged, but that this does not happen when they are incorporated into others. In that case they leave their new companions at the first opportunity and cling to the gun-carriages, for the confidence inspired by mental contagion disappears amid unfamiliar surroundings.

CHAPTER IV

CONSEQUENCES DUE TO LACK OF FORESIGHT AND TO PSYCHOLOGICAL ERRORS IN THE GENESIS OF ARMED ENCOUNTERS

1. *Lack of Foresight and Deficient Powers of Observation as General Characteristics of Political Psychology*

MOST physical phenomena are readily reduced to formulas, but this is not the case with the incidents of social life, for so many different factors enter into them that no brief rule can enable us to foresee them.

Even with regard to events which are quite close at hand prediction is always uncertain, because not many brains are capable of grasping the proximate concatenations of an event, and still less its remote consequences, and few indeed are the statesmen who possess the faculty of anticipating to even a small extent the development of important matters.

The difficulties of foreseeing events which are far in the future are very apparent, but it is not so easy to understand why the capacity for correct observation is so rare. Yet history shows that Governments which possess all possible sources of information in their ambassadors, military attachés, spies, and other agents, and which might therefore be enlightened quite easily, almost never know what

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is happening in neighbouring countries. For instance, it is obvious that if Napoleon III had known Germany's real military strength in 1870 he would never have embarked upon the unfortunate war which was to cost France so dear ; and it is quite as obvious that if we had known what the Teutonic methods and armaments were before 1914, in the way that a fairly judicious spectator might have been supposed to be able to find out during the German Grand Manœuvres, we could have remedied all the defects that experience has revealed in our organization.

Statesmen have always shown more indifferent powers of observation in the province of national psychology than in anything else ; for they wish to judge human beings according to their own preconceived ideas, and make the serious mistake of measuring all mentalities by the same standard.

Great statesmen have always been great psychologists, but even when they have succeeded in penetrating the motives which inspire their fellow-countrymen to action those of other nations have often been a closed book to them.

Napoleon, who knew the French mind so well, was absolutely deceived about the mentality of the Russians and the Spaniards, and this lack of understanding led him to undertake campaigns which resulted in the downfall of his Empire.

One of Bismarck's supreme accomplishments was the profound knowledge which he possessed, not only of the German people but of foreign nations as well. He knew just how far to go, where he must stop, and the means which were to be used

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for instigating popular movements. By changing a few words in the celebrated Ems telegram he forced France to declare war. The truth would have come out after two or three days of patient investigation, but he understood the psychology of the French, and conjectured that even such a small meed of patience as this was beyond them.

Ignorance of a nation's psychology often costs its rulers dear. Ignorance of Boer psychology led a British Prime Minister to plunge his country into the Transvaal War, which was not only ruinous but utterly useless as well; for England was obliged to recognize that she could not vanquish the soul of this small nation, and in the end had to grant it almost entire freedom and relinquish the attempt to conquer it.

The lack of foresight and observation characteristic of politics is abundantly demonstrated by the history of the wars of the Second Empire, for every single campaign of that period, especially the Crimean and Mexican Wars, betrays an absolute lack of understanding in the rulers of France. Their interest lay in waging one war, and no more, and its object should have been to prevent Prussia from forming an alliance with Austria, and thus reducing her to impotence. Such a war would have averted the disasters which afterwards overtook France.

But the incidents which preceded the war of 1870 may be ranked among those which betray the greatest lack of foresight and understanding. A glance at the files of French newspapers, parliamentary speeches, and diplomatic docu-

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ments which date from 1865 to 1870, and deal with the events that took place from Sadowa to Sedan, shows an accumulation of faulty judgments, absurd predictions, and stupendous misconceptions. Blindness was universal, perspicacity there was none, and if these events were intelligible later on, it is because their consequences had developed and there could no longer be any question about them.

Considering the complications of modern politics, one must admit that even events which are closest at hand are difficult to foresee, and it should not, therefore, be a matter of any great surprise that on the very eve of the present war one of the most eminent of French statesmen was capable of writing :—

“ Austria-Hungary is a perfectly quiet country. She is not a peril for any one ” (*Figaro*, June 5, 1914).

How shall we explain this incapacity on all sides to understand present events and to have even a little presentiment of their consequences? It is chiefly due to the fact that most statesmen are shut up within a cycle of political beliefs derived from mystic or affective sources. They do not argue from events, but from the ideas which they form of these events, and their ideas have no connection with reality, but are usually a mere reflection of their feelings and desires.

If we could go back to the origins of most mistakes in history we should always find among them lack of foresight, lack of observation, and lack of understanding.

Psychological errors are the most disastrous of

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all those that a statesman can commit, and his task is accordingly very difficult, for the destiny of a nation often depends upon his foresight or his mistakes. The good judgment of Cavour created Italian unity, and that of Bismarck made the German Empire, while, on the other hand, a crowned visionary's lack of foresight cost the French people Sedan and an invasion which is one cause of the present war. The will of man does not rule the events of history altogether, but it at least orients the course they take, for our heedlessness and our mistakes create disasters whose burden we must afterwards bear.

The errors of statesmen are often due to the fact that they neglect the affective, mystic, and collective influences which sway nations. The present war has furnished striking examples of such mistakes, among which will always figure the stupendous failure of our Balkan policy, and especially the ease with which diplomats who were considered eminent were flouted by the Bulgarians and Turks for months together.

Men are not insensible pieces on a chessboard, nor can cold calculation move them at its will, for over-confidence in the processes of intellectual ratiocination often prevents an understanding of the motives which rule the human soul.

The gift of foreseeing events is very useful to statesmen, but it does not seem particularly advantageous to those private individuals who possess it, as M. Clémenceau remarks :—

“ I have long observed that the unfortunate man who looks too far ahead is apt to be considered a

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public enemy by his short-sighted comrades. Nothing contributes more to political success than a limitation of the horizon. In his cruel *Psychology of the Crowd* Dr. Gustave Le Bon has not, perhaps, dwelt sufficiently on the fact that the definition of 'people' is 'crowd,' and that this in the highest degree facilitates the action of bad Governments of every name and description, as history constantly shows."

We shall now put these generalities aside and proceed to mention some of the psychological mistakes made in the various countries before the war broke out and during its course.

2. *Psychological Errors and Lack of Foresight in France.*

Many psychological mistakes have been made by France. One of the most serious was the pacifist illusion, which for a long time made us neglect our armaments and roused opposition to the law of three years' military service, although the necessity for it could not be gainsaid when Germany's increasingly menacing attitude showed the nearness of our danger.

Many of our rulers could, however, see no evidence of this; for they were so generally persuaded that there could be no European conflagration in the present state of civilization that most of the ministers who were in office at the time when war was declared had actually voted against the law of three years' military service. While the Germans were adding to their armaments day

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by day, the French were dreaming of universal peace.

Moreover, it was held that in case war should break out the hostilities would certainly be of very short duration, as they could scarcely be prolonged owing to such modern arms as machine-guns, quick-firing cannons, explosive shells, and so forth. It was supposed that the mere fact of calling out all the able-bodied men between the ages of eighteen and forty-six would instantly destroy the life of the countries engaged, and that the belligerent nations would be threatened with death from actual want.

Experience has shown how worthless these forecasts were. The war seems likely to be very long instead of short, and, as Lord Curzon said to the English volunteers, it will be many a Christmas before they will see their country again. The people have readily adapted themselves to the new conditions of existence, in spite of all predictions to the contrary. Old men, women, and children have bravely taken the places of the men who were lacking for the labour upon which the subsistence of a country depends, and although life's pace is slower, it has not stopped.

Another general conviction was that one or two great battles would settle the fate of the opposing armies because of the enormous masses of men engaged, while, on the contrary, the essential characteristic of the present war has proved to be the extreme rarity of great battles and the frequent occurrence of small actions spread out over an immensely long line.

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Few writers had anticipated the acts of violence which have been committed during the present struggle, and yet it does not seem to me that they were difficult to foresee. Long ago I said in my *Psychologie politique*, with reference to the coming war, which I considered inevitable :—

“Let us not forget that it will be one of those ultimate struggles like many others recorded in history, and that, like them, it will cause one of the belligerent nations to disappear for ever. There will be terrible, pitiless affrays, in which whole countrysides will be so methodically ravaged that not a house, a tree, or a man will be left in them.”

I was sure that the struggle was close at hand, and I added :—

“Let us keep these ideas vividly in mind when we educate our children and train our soldiers, and let us leave to oratorical eloquence the vain speeches on pacifism, fraternity, and other nonsense, that make one think of the theological discussions in which the Byzantines indulged when Mohammed II was breaching the walls of Constantinople.”

M. Hanotaux, who was formerly French Minister for Foreign Affairs, points out some of the psychological mistakes which have been made by our governing class since the outbreak of the war. Their number is really excessive :—

“The Great Powers had important reasons for intervening in the Balkans. From the day when Turkey took up her position against them it was their task to nullify the advantages that the two Germanic Empires had won by the Ottoman

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Alliance. Russia was confronted with a new enemy and blockaded on the south by land and sea, and England's possession of the Suez Canal and India was also threatened.

"It is strange that diplomatic precautions were not taken in the beginning with regard to this matter, and that there was so little accurate information as to Turkey's eventual position in case of a conflict that the Paris market loaned the Sublime Porte twenty millions sterling only a few days before war was declared. It is strange, too, that when the necessity for action had become apparent more swift and energetic measures were not adopted, and that the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* were not followed into the harbour of Constantinople.

"We have here a series of mistakes which weigh heavily upon the present situation."

3. *Psychological Errors and Lack of Foresight in Germany.*

The psychological mistakes of the French were serious because they involved defects of preparation and entailed disaster; but the Germans, too, committed many costly errors though not such grave ones.

According to an interview with a German personage published in the *Dépêche coloniale* several years ago, the Germans were counting greatly on the following factors to help them conquer France:—

1. French religious and political dissensions.
2. Anti-militarism.

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3. The general federation of labour, which would proclaim a general strike and a military strike as soon as war should be declared.

4. French physical and moral decadence.

5. Disorganization of the French Army and Navy.

6. The generally pacifist character of French institutions.

The reality has shown how ill-founded were these predictions, as we very well know. Their author was merely interpreting ideas which were common enough in his own country, but he had forgotten the influence of that essential psychological factor, the power of the national spirit, which dominates the divergent volitions of individuals when a crisis threatens and unites the hearts of all against a common danger.

Another thing which the Germans did not understand was that the violation of Belgian neutrality would arouse the wrath of England, and would instantly reconcile parties which seemed permanently sundered in that country. In any case, they could not foresee the effect which the violation of a treaty would produce because the principles of international law as taught in their textbooks were utterly different from those professed by the English. And, lastly, Germany had no idea that weak Belgium would oppose an armed invasion, for here again the strength of the atavistic elements had escaped her notice.

The lack of foresight exhibited in all these different cases caused the miscarriage of the German plan for a swift and startling march upon Paris.

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We have already shown that one of the principal causes of the war was Germany's mistaken idea that neither Russia nor England, and still less France, would be willing to intervene. This was the reason why she advised Austria to assume an uncompromising attitude, and gave that Power leave to crush Servia at its leisure. Here was a fresh psychological error.

Germany's psychological mistakes with regard to Italy were quite as great, for the arrogant bearing which she adopted towards this Ally ended by making a new enemy.

One of the very gross psychological blunders committed by the Germans was the unnecessary barbarity with which they treated the countries that they conquered. This alienated all neutral nations, America included, though such a result was certainly not the aim of the Germans, for they subsequently spent many millions in the United States for the purchase of newspapers, printing of pamphlets, delivery of lectures, and so forth, in their attempts to change public opinion. M. Brioux shows clearly how feeling in America developed :—

“A most interesting fact, and one which seems to me significant, is the development of American public opinion in favour of France, as I have seen it, I may say, with my own eyes. I will tell you, as an example, of Mr. Butler, the President of Columbia University. At the beginning of the war he was very pro-German, for he was a Commander of the Order of the Red Eagle, and made no secret of his opinions. As events have developed, the force of circumstances has been such, and the

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truth has become so luminously clear, that Mr. Butler now frankly expresses his sympathy for France. I went back to Boston after an absence of three months, and my reception was much warmer than at my first visit.

"At the close of my lectures young men often came to me and said, with a good deal of emotion : 'We are Germans, but we want to shake hands with you. You know what that means, so please do not ask us to explain ourselves any further.' There is general indignation at such acts of German vandalism as the burning of Louvain, the bombardment of Reims, and so forth. The young men who were studying painting, sculpture, and architecture at the Art School handed me a protest signed by more than five hundred names."

The psychological blunders of the Germans have continued throughout the campaign. There is the blunder of the notorious manifesto which was signed by the German intellectuals, and which denies manifest facts ; the blunder of famous professors who tell neutrals that Germany's object is to conquer the smaller countries and subject them to her rule ; the blunder of the improbable exaggerations contained in the telegrams, booklets, and pamphlets with which the Germans have deluged the world ; and, lastly, the blunder of the Chancellor, who invented a contemptible explanation to justify his historic phrase about considering treaties as scraps of paper.

The Germans have prospered in very few of those undertakings which can be characterized as of a psychological nature. Their most patent

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success was that of inducing Turkey to declare war against the Allies ; but this was a simple matter, because the Germans had only to dazzle the Turkish Government with money and the prestige of their might, which are the two factors that always influence Ottoman rulers. It is now admitted that if the Triple Entente had shown the requisite energy at the beginning of December 1914 Turkey would have remained neutral, and it is quite probable that she would not have thought of forbidding the Allied Fleet to pass through the Dardanelles at that time. A few millions skilfully disbursed would have been enough to keep Turkey at peace had any difficulty arisen.

Aside from the very small success of a psychological nature which the Germans obtained, their mistakes were of considerable moment, and justify Prince von Bülow's saying about the political incapacity of his fellow-countrymen. It is a consequence of their inability to understand the psychology of other nations, for German diplomats always forget that the same yardstick will not measure everybody.

The following extract from the German newspaper *Der Tag* as published in the *Temps* of March 29, 1915, shows that the Germans themselves at last admit the repeated psychological errors into which they have blundered :—

“ We have been mistaken in so many of our calculations ! We expected that the whole of India would revolt at the first sound of the guns in Europe, but, behold, thousands and tens of thousands of Indians are fighting with the British and

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against us. We expected that the British Empire would crumble away ; but the British Colonies are one with the Mother Country as never before. We expected a successful uprising in British South Africa ; but we see only a fiasco there. We expected disorders in Ireland ; but Ireland is sending some of her best contingents against us. We believed that the peace-at-any-price party was all-powerful in England ; but it has disappeared in the general enthusiasm aroused by the war against Germany. We considered that England was degenerate and incapable of becoming a serious factor in the war ; but she has proved our most dangerous enemy.

“The same is true with regard to France and Russia. We thought that France was depraved and had lost her sense of national solidarity ; but now we know that the French are formidable adversaries. We believed that Russia could not do anything, for we fancied that the people were too profoundly dissatisfied to fight for the Government, and we counted upon her rapid collapse as a great military Power ; but Russia has mobilized her millions of subjects very quickly and very successfully, her people are filled with enthusiasm, and her force is overwhelming. A heavy burden of responsibility has been assumed by those who have induced us to make all these mistakes and false reckonings, and who have led us into such great misapprehension with regard to our neighbours and their concerns.”

The psychological errors of the Germans have impressed writers of every country. Signor Pareto,

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an Italian, has this to say of them in the review *Scientia* of March 1, 1915:—

“The ties which bound Italy to the Triple Alliance were loosened by Austria’s brutality and by the tendency of both Germany and Austria to give Italy a subordinate position in the league. On the other hand, there could be no question of an alliance or even of a lasting peace between Germany and France because of the conquest of Alsace-Lorraine and the intolerable persecutions to which the inhabitants of those provinces were subjected, as well as on account of the incessant activities of Germany, who was led on by her desire of expansion to thwart every French colonial enterprise. It was very ill-advised on the part of the German Government to let such aggressions interrupt the dissolvent work of General André and M. Pelletan, and not to have waited patiently, in more recent times, until the anti-militarist democracy in both France and England had completed its destructive work.

“. . . England has the art, as had Rome, of gaining the friendship of the peoples subjected to her rule, or merely included within her sphere of influence. This is why Rome triumphantly withstood Hannibal’s invasion of Italy, and why the British Empire is united at the present time. Carthage never possessed this art, nor does Germany possess it, and the effects of its lack appeared in the case of Carthage when the Romans invaded Africa, just as they are shown to-day in the case of Germany by the feeling of her subjects in Alsace-Lorraine, the Danish Duchies, and German Poland.”

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4. *Psychological Errors and Lack of Foresight in Russia.*

The lack of foresight which Russia has exhibited is of a rather different character from that shown by either Germany or France. It is not really lack of foresight, but is rather a succession of psychological errors which are due to the mystic temperament of those who rule the mighty Russian Empire. These mistakes have had the effect of rendering the Russians very unpopular in countries like Galicia, which they conquered at the beginning of the war, for they persecuted their new subjects on religious grounds, forgetting that convictions of this sort are the most sacred possession of a nation, and that force is powerless to contend against them. We have no full details as yet with regard to the religious proscriptions in Galicia, and can therefore do no more than quote extracts from foreign newspapers which cannot be suspected of partiality because they have always been very favourable to Russia. The following is from a correspondent of the *Journal de Genève* of February 16, 1915:—

“By a decree of September 30, 1914, all Ruthenian books printed in Galicia, not excluding even prayer-books, are to be deposited in the police offices, where they will be destroyed. The penalty for disobedience is a three months' prison sentence or a fine of three thousand roubles for the owners. All correspondence, even of a private character, in the Ruthenian language is prohibited. Twenty thousand Galician employees of the post-office, rail-

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ways, and so forth, belonging to the Austrian administration, are now without positions and in a state of the most abject poverty. Their places have been taken by Russians who come from the interior of the Czar's dominions and do not even understand the local speech."

The President of the Ukranian Parliamentary Deputation wrote to the same newspaper on April 28, 1915:—

"The Russian invasion of Galicia has destroyed all the work of many years at a single blow. The Ukranian language has been absolutely prohibited for official purposes as well as in the churches and schools. All the Ukranian newspapers in Galicia have been suppressed, the libraries have been destroyed, and the collections of the national museums have been sent to Russia. All the Ukranian societies have been broken up, and hundreds of the notables of Ukranian Galicia have been sent to Siberia.

"The Uniate-Greek Church, to which all the Ukrainians of Eastern Galicia have belonged for more than two centuries (there were practically no adherents of the Orthodox Faith before the war), and which had become the national Ukranian Church, is now persecuted by every possible means. The Metropolitan Archbishop, Count Andreas Szeptyckyj, who is its head, has been dragged off to Kursk, in the interior of Russia, many of the priests have been deported, and the terrorized and half-starved people have been converted to Orthodoxy by the threats and promises of popes imported from Russia. In the Uniate-

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model of Bishop Eulogius of Volhynia, the celebrated at the suggestion and after the model of Bishop Eulogius of Volhynia, the celebrated Orthodox proselytizer. The Russians are now beginning to change the Catholic Churches into Orthodox Churches by force: 'because they were Orthodox two or three hundred years ago, and they ought to become Orthodox again.'"

The Russian newspaper *Novoje Wremja* says that the Holy Synod has appointed a commission to watch over the religious life of the Russian population in Eastern Galicia, and according to a manifesto of the Czar "Galicia has returned to the bosom of Holy Mother Russia after a century of Catholic and Polish domination."

It is no surprise to learn that the Galicians, who had been so cruelly oppressed, greeted the expulsion of the Russians from their country with an ecstasy of enthusiasm.

The *Journal d'une Française en Allemagne*, published by the *Revue de Paris* (March 1915), says that "the Russian persecutions have resulted only in arousing the mistrust of the Poles, who are clinging all the more closely to Germany and Austria." And a correspondent of the same periodical (March 23, 1915) clearly shows the effect of these Draconian measures upon Polish feeling:—

"The Poles whom I have seen are very discouraged. . . . One of them said to me: 'See how Bobrinski, the Russian Governor of Eastern Galicia, is abolishing all the liberties to which the people were accustomed. The Austrian rule is

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regretted by everybody there, even by the Ruthenians, who were so glad to be Russian. You must admit that it is not encouraging. Moreover, half of the new Government employees are Baltic Russians of German origin. A camarilla of ex-Prussians is still in command of the Imperial Council at Petrograd, and as it broke the Czar's word after 1905, so it will break this promise too.'

" . . . There are many people even in Warsaw who are disheartened, for new restrictions have just been imposed upon the schools and the persecutions still go on. The newspapers are not even permitted to speak of the Grand Duke's promise."

These stupid regulations, which carry one back to far distant barbarian ages, have naturally borne fruit, and have justified the suspicions of the Poles. M. Jaworski, the President of the Superior Committee of Poland, says in *Scientia* of May 15, 1915:—

"Will I be believed? In all Russian Poland there is not one single Polish family, not one single Polish family, I repeat, which does not weep for one of its dear ones who has died on the gallows because he had too great a love of his country and of liberty, or who is buried alive in a Russian prison, or who is dragging out a life of the most utter misery in the icy deserts of Siberia.

"All patriotic Poles understand the gravity of the situation very well, and have decided upon a definite course of action. They have spurned the Grand Duke's enticing promises, for they feel that an abyss divides their civilization and national interests from the civilization and interests of

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Russia, and they know that if Russia is victorious Poland will inevitably be crushed."

I have dwelt upon the gross and stupid psychological mistakes made by the Russians during their short stay in Galicia, because they bear out a theory which I have often developed in my books, and which is that the mystic element entirely dominates the affective and the rational elements. Individuals who obey mystic impulses lose all of their good sense, become incapable of seeing their own interest, even when it is plainest, and are not to be influenced by any argument whatsoever.

CHAPTER V

STRATEGICAL ERRORS RESULTING FROM PSYCHOLOGICAL ERRORS

1. *The Psychological Factors of Strategy*

ALL great captains have been convinced that war is quite as much a matter of psychology as of strategy. "In war," said Napoleon, "the moral is everything. The moral and the force of opinion are to the material as three to one."

Strategical errors may of course have various causes, such as lack of munitions and supplies, unforeseen events, and so forth; but many of them arise from psychological factors alone. For instance, we shall see that, according to the most competent authorities, the inadequacy of the Allied navies at the beginning of the war was entirely due to the extreme timidity and lack of foresight of those who were in supreme command of them. I have already stated how vitally important in time of war are such psychological elements as endurance, patience, initiative, and so forth.

Many strategical mistakes in a campaign are brought about by psychological errors which were committed at its beginning. For example, the French Government knew perfectly well what the effective force of the German Army was in 1870, for this information was published in many different

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compilations ; but it was a victim to one of those erroneous comparisons which cause so many mistaken convictions. It was persuaded, as was also so eminent a man as M. Thiers, that the military value of the German reserves was no greater than that of the French National Guard, which at that time consisted of civilians who lacked both discipline and military training.

2. *French Strategic Errors resulting from Psychological Errors.*

The present war has no resemblance to its predecessors, but beside those of its developments which are new and could not have been foreseen, it has revealed the operation of general laws whose consequences might have been suspected. In his *Vom heutigen Kriege* Bernhardi clearly shows this permanence of certain laws whose importance is not affected by particular cases :—

“ In war, as in the majority of social matters, there are certain laws and phenomena which re-appear continually, and certain relations between cause and effect which never change. Certain circumstances and causes have always been decisive, while the bulk of special phenomena are of a changing and fortuitous nature ” (vol. i. p. 19).

I cannot enumerate all the mistakes that have been made, and shall mention only a few of the most costly ones, which could have been avoided by a little foresight.

It is impossible that in 1914 the French General Staff should not have been aware of German mili-

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tary methods ; but a sentiment which I may call class vanity convinced it that the French ideas were better, and only the first defeats taught it that the Germans can be fought with none but their own methods. At that time the French officers did not realize either the preponderant influence exerted by artillery or the defensive strength of the trenches, which stopped the German invasion so easily, though much too late. These things should have been learned in time of peace.

We must admit that the military education of the French Army was very indifferent, for when the war began we witnessed a revival of all the defects which had been so disastrous forty-five years before. There was a lack of scouts, places of concealment furnished by the natural features of the landscape remained unutilized, attacks were made from distant points unsupported by artillery, and so forth. We have succeeded in correcting these mistakes, thanks to our adaptability, but we lost immense numbers of men first, and incurred several defeats. If our military attachés had only watched the German Grand Manœuvres at which it was their duty to be present, we should have been informed about all such points. The fact that so many essential matters escaped the notice of these men is due to the psychological phenomenon that ideas which are too fixed in the mind prevent the entry of those which are opposed to them, so that the specialist is incapable of receiving any thoughts but his own. If you apply this principle to the interpretation of the remarks made by your friends, you will soon see how true it is.

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Among strategical errors of a psychological origin we may mention those which ended in the bombardment of the cathedral of Reims. The French were convinced, merely by hearing some officer or other say so, that the forts which protected Reims were untenable, and accordingly evacuated them. As a matter of fact, it would have taken very little work to have made them impregnable, since the Germans held them for more than a year after being installed in them, and utilized them freely for bombarding the cathedral. Even military men have never been able to explain this incomprehensible evacuation, and it will long burden the memory of the officers who ordered it. At the beginning of October 1914 General Cherfils said with regard to the immense importance of the forts at Reims:—

“The line of the Aisne, which was abandoned by our General Staff in consequence of a preconceived idea, was, with its prolongation through Reims and Montfaucon to the Argonne, a well-chosen defensive position that was particularly strengthened by Reims. We had abandoned the entrenched camp of Reims for some unknown reason, but its forts were intact. The Germans occupied them and turned our own defences against us. The forts of Brimont, Vitry-les-Reims, and Nogent-l'Abbesse in particular became formidable bases for the operations of the barbarians, and from these points they bombarded Reims and endeavoured to destroy its sanctuary, which religion, history, and art make thrice holy. . . . Reims is the pivot around which oscillate the two projec-

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tions of the long curtain which extends from the Oise to the Argonne."

During the early part of the campaign the French General Staff lived upon the most singular illusions. On August 25, 1914, or almost at the moment when the German invasion and the lightning-like march on Paris were taking place, the official communiqué read:—

"We have preserved full liberty of using our railway system, and all the seas are open to bring us supplies. Our operations have allowed Russia to come into action and penetrate to the heart of East Prussia."

Russia was far indeed from having penetrated to the heart of East Prussia; but, on the contrary, it was Prussia who was then penetrating to the heart of Russia.

The bulletins of the General Staff were very weak from the psychological point of view, too. For instance, the communiqué of the 5th of December said that "Reims has been bombarded with particular fury." Of course the Germans wanted this fact to be known, but it was not our business to tell the public that a million French soldiers were not strong enough to prevent a few thousands of Germans from spreading ruin and death day by day in one of the most important cities of France.

But the most serious of all the strategical errors of a psychological nature committed by the French was that which at the beginning of the war induced the General Staff to believe that the Germans were coming by way of Alsace. It was responsible

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for the fact that all the French armies were massed facing east, while the enemy was actually invading from the north. Both French and German authors had published many dissertations to prove that France would be entered via Belgium, and towards the middle of the month of August the military critic of *The Times* gave maps to show that thirty German army corps were massed on the north and west of France, while there were only three or four on the whole eastern frontier; but it was all in vain. Nothing made any difference, for mistaken ideas are so powerful that the notions of the General Staff were immovable, and the upshot of it all was the dismal defeat of Charleroi.

3. *Psychological Errors in Naval Warfare.*

Psychological factors had an absolutely preponderant share in the Allies' utilization of their fleet, for their efforts were paralysed by that great psychological dominant, timidity, whose consequences have proved disastrous indeed. There has never been a better instance of the degree to which physical strength may be reduced to naught by moral influences. Courageous men were, of course, not wanting among the Allies, but of resolute and enterprising characters there was a great lack. At the beginning of the war, when the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* entered the Dardanelles after bombarding Bona and Philippeville, if the numerous battleships belonging to the Allies' Mediterranean fleet had followed them, we should have been at Constantinople long ago, and we should not have lost the

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ships and men that the attempt to force the Dardanelles was to cost us later on. The Admirals in command could easily have passed through the Straits, but they did not dare to do so.

Even naval men have been obliged to admit that the Allies showed great lack of foresight and made many mistakes in their tactics on the sea. Admiral Degouy says in the *Revue de Paris* :—

“First of all it was a misfortune, and a misfortune which will burden all our future operations, that the fleets of the Triple Entente could not at the start assume the offensive in the swift and energetic manner which conforms to the normal activities of modern navies and brings all their powers into play.

“... One can hardly doubt that at the beginning of hostilities we lost the opportunity of dealing the Austrian fleet such a heavy blow as would have paralysed it for a long time to come.

“Our navy was not unprepared for the most energetic action ; but, owing to the lack of accurate information, to the lack of ability to distinguish between what we, as well as the enemy, could do and could not do in those hours of anguish, to the lack of military discernment, or rather of political sagacity, and also to the lack of the precious offensive mentality which we seem not to have had at all for the last forty-four years, counsels of prudence—I do not wish to say timidity—obtained a natural, easy, and undisputed ascendancy over those of that clear-sighted, calm, and confident audacity which alone is the main factor of great success.”

The author shows the timid attitude adopted by

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the British Navy at the beginning of the war, although it was much more powerful than the enemy. "It was a case," says he, "in which the passive defensive was systematically employed by the stronger against the weaker."

As a matter of fact, the German fleet was in a very critical position when the war broke out:—

"At this very time (on the 25th and 26th of July) it was manœuvring off the coast of Bergen, far from its natural base of operations, which it had to reach in order to renew supplies, fill its bunkers and magazines with coal and munitions, complete its crews, and make all its preparations for a great and decisive struggle, while to crown this misfortune, the British fleet was at the same time much more powerful than it ordinarily was."

The author of the article remarks that he cannot understand the reasons for so much caution:—

"It was a far remove indeed from the famous saying, 'The frontiers of England are the coasts of the enemy,' when the whole southern part of the North Sea was left free so long to the adversary's mine-layers, and when he was given time besides to organize the submarine defence of his estuaries, to complete the divisions of his *Matrosen-Artilleristen* and his coast signallers, to arm a multitude of auxiliary ships and reserve fighting units, to strengthen the somewhat weak character of his coast defences (and what a low-lying coast it is, easy for ships to shell!) by surrounding them with batteries of mortars and defending them with mobile forces of all three arms taken from the reserve

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formations, because the Ninth Active Army Corps had left for Belgium the first day. . . .

“ In the Baltic, too, there was the same holding off, the same inertia.”

The timidity of the English was probably due to the irresolution of the British Cabinet, which was rather divided, but the results of their dangerous hesitation furnish one more proof of how important are decision and foresight in a country's rulers.

The present war has likewise shown the English statesmen how little some of their predecessors could look into the future. The Island of Heligoland is one of the most useful naval stations which the Germans own, for it is very near their coast and protects the port of Hamburg, so that if it had been in the possession of England the whole aspect of the war would probably have been changed. This island belonged to England a few years ago, and Lord Salisbury, who had no suspicion of its enormous importance, offered it to Bismarck in 1890 in exchange for the recognition of the British Protectorate over Zanzibar. No doubt he imagined that he was throwing a sprat to catch a herring; but, as a matter of fact, he was throwing many sprats and getting but a very small herring in return, and was offering one more confirmation of the aphorism in which I have synthesized one of the bases of political psychology, “ A statesman without foresight is a creator of disaster.”

Russia on her part committed the same psychological errors. The Admiral whom I have just quoted says :—

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"The Russians had torpedo-boats and destroyers, mine-layers and mine-sweepers, and submarines too, quite as much as the French and English had. As a matter of fact, they had a great many of these light craft in the Baltic ; but like their Allies, they never dreamed of utilizing these invaluable factors except for purely defensive action. Perhaps neither material nor crews were really ready for an immediate offensive, although they were all assembled in active fleets and small squadrons every summer, or perhaps the Russian Admiralty had previously adopted fixed notions of timidity, prudence, and effacement with regard to the German Navy, whose strength had been strangely exaggerated by Teutonic boasting, though it was really powerful enough as a matter of fact. . . ."

All this justifies the principle, which I have already had occasion to repeat, that in war the psychological factors are the soul of the material factors, for the latter are valueless unless they are animated by a strong will.

It must not be inferred from what I have just said that the Allied fleets have not been of any use in the war. It is true that they have timorously taken refuge in ports whose entrances are protected by steel nets ; but still they are there, and the mere fact that they exist gives us the freedom of the ocean, prevents the German fleet from venturing out of the North Sea and the Baltic, and also cuts off the intercourse of foreign ships with Germany. Even though it is inert, the British fleet gives its country the mastery of the sea.

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4. *German Strategical Errors.*

The Germans have certainly not committed such gross psychological errors as have their enemies, but numerous ones must be placed to their account, and, as I have already shown, they have been mistaken in many of their anticipations.

Bernhardi recognized the possible importance of trenches in the warfare of the future ; but he was convinced that they would be little used by the Germans, as he says in his *Vom heutigen Kriege* :—

“ We will surely not shelter ourselves behind ramparts and ditches. The genius of the German people will preserve us from that. . . . One who defends himself vigorously will not easily make up his mind to sacrifice his freedom of action and instal himself behind earthworks ” (vol. ii. p. 250).

But they have made up their minds to it, nevertheless !

The most celebrated of German Generals made many other miscalculations with regard to the future, as a Swiss writer reminds him :—

“ Field-Marshal von der Goltz is not prophesying for the first time. He was quite as voluble in 1912, when the Balkan League was formed. He was supposed to know more than any one else about the Turkish Army, which he had organized, and German, Austrian, Hungarian, English, and even French journalists besieged his door. He lavished the treasures of his sure convictions upon them all, telling them that the poor Bulgarians, Greeks, Serbians, and Montenegrins would catch

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a terrible beating, and that the Turkish Army was one of the greatest in the world. Everybody believed him, and the entire policy of Austria and Germany was dictated by von der Goltz Pasha's infallible predictions. . . . Then came Kirk-Kilissee, Lulle - Bourgas, the capture of Adrianople, the battles of Kossovo and Monastir, and the seizure of Salonika and Janina. The great Turko-German General had been badly mistaken, and for a time he was even in disgrace."

It is easier to fire a gun than to manipulate psychological factors, and the Germans' blundering use of the latter gained them enemies whom they might without difficulty have avoided making. In any case, the one and only factor to which their psychology gives free play is intimidation. What its results are we shall presently see.

The Germans have never succeeded in understanding the psychology of their adversaries, and this is why their strategical anticipations have so often been mistaken, as Colonel Feyler points out :—

"For fifteen months of warfare the Government has constantly been promising the swift accomplishment of remote aims, but these aims have never been achieved. Paris was to have been taken in six weeks ; but the Germans did not count upon accidents. Calais was to have followed in the autumn ; but there was no way of getting past the Belgian Army. The Zeppelins were to have destroyed London ; but though London has suffered a little, the reputation of the Zeppelins has suffered more. German submarines were to have blockaded England ; but England has made fishing for

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submarines a form of sport. The Russians were to have been surrounded at Warsaw, then at Vilna, then at Riga, and no doubt somewhere else ; but the Austro-German armies have all they can do to resist the Russian attacks."



BOOK VI

**PSYCHOLOGICAL ELEMENTS IN GER-
MAN METHODS OF WARFARE**

CHAPTER I

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL BASES OF THE GERMAN METHODS OF WARFARE

1. *The Object of Warfare*

THE Germans cannot be reproached with neglecting the moral factors of armed encounters, for although they have often been deceived as to the choice of the methods which should be employed, they have by no means disregarded the importance of the psychological element itself. The fundamental principle which their writers lay down is that the object of warfare is to dominate the will of one's adversary by all possible means, and to impose one's own will upon him.

"The soul of a nation must be subdued and vanquished before victory can be wrested from it."

This ascendancy over the enemy nation's soul is a moral effect, not only of material factors but of psychological operations as well. Moreover, the Germans do not look upon war merely as a means of mastering the will of their adversaries, but as the most decisive way of demonstrating a nation's moral pre-eminence.

This idea was formulated by Hegel, has been repeated and expanded by many authors, and has been brought to mind again in the present war.

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Herr Seeberg, a German author, makes the following remarks in an essay on "The Ethical Right of War," which is summarized by the Italian review *Scientia* of May 1915:—

"War revises the relations of real historical values and forces. It assigns the nations their due positions in proportion to their available forces, and gives them a field for their activities in accordance with their capacities. War facilitates the revelation of truth. Herein lies its eminently moral significance in history, and to this one must look for the sources of its ethical right. No one need object that war is only a demonstration of superior physical force in the best of cases, for the present war is proof of the very opposite.

"War demonstrates the superiority, not alone of physical force but of ethical and cultural force as well. War is the greatest judgment of universal history. Some nations rise and others fall; but the judgment of war is just."

Before examining the psychological principles which sway the Germans in the present conflict, let us recall some of the attempts that have been made to limit the laws of warfare among civilized nations.

2. *The Laws of War.*

The Greeks appear to have been the only people of antiquity who discussed the limits of the laws of war. "All warfare," says Polybius, "is a disturbance of the existing state of law, but nevertheless it has laws of its own."

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In all the other parts of the ancient world, and especially among the Romans, the will of the conqueror was the only recognized law. He could destroy cities and massacre their inhabitants at his pleasure, and the captives whom he spared were sold as slaves or eaten alive by wild beasts in the arena for the amusement of the populace. There were very few writers who protested against this law of force, and their protests were mild indeed.

These ideas with regard to the laws of war were very long-lived, and the modern era is almost reached before the civil population of conquered cities is spared, the wounded are nursed, and other ameliorations are introduced.

For the last few years there has been at The Hague a sort of international tribunal whose aim is to codify what we may call the laws of war. The worthy jurists who are endeavouring to establish this code are animated by the most praiseworthy motives, but a little reflection would have shown them that their ideas could never be carried out. As a matter of fact, they forget that a code is worth nothing unless it is supported by sufficient force to guarantee that it will be respected. The Hague Conventions could only harm nations which obeyed them whilst the enemy violated them without any scruples of conscience. This was exactly the view taken by the Germans, who never dreamed of observing these Conventions, but agreed to them in the hope of paralysing the enemy's action and securing great advantage to themselves.

In violating the Hague Conventions the Germans

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are true to the theories held by the majority of their jurists, who have, in fact, never made any secret of their contempt for agreements which aspire to limit the rights of a conqueror. These rights they consider absolute as long as no one is strong enough to restrict them.

From Grotius down, almost all German authors admit no limits to the laws of war except voluntary ones. Lueder shares this opinion, taking his stand on the fact that the most terrible means must sometimes be employed in order to end a struggle quickly. Nor has the immunity of non-combatants ever been considered obligatory by the Germans, who hold that there is nothing to prevent a conqueror from exterminating the civil population of a city and confiscating its wealth.

This is, of course, a revival of the ancient idea that there is no law between enemies, and that nothing prevents killing the wounded and massacring prisoners, provided such actions are advantageous to the conqueror. From the German point of view war is just such a pitiless struggle between nations as that which dominates the animal world, where every creature is hunter or hunted, and it is easy to understand what contempt these theorists of ruthless destruction have for the old ideas of chivalry. The slaughter and devastation described in another chapter are merely an application of principles which are generally accepted by the Germans, and which have inspired their military writers and the instructions of their General Staff, as we shall now see.

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3. *Psychological Principles Formulated by the German General Staff.*

What I have just pointed out is enough to show that the deeds which have been done by the German Army, and which have aroused such deep indignation throughout the world, are not the mere sanguinary excesses of a soldiery left to indulge its instincts, or even of depraved intellectuals, but are the consequences of principles long ago laid down by German theorists and disseminated by the military writers whose works have inspired the Teutonic officer. The most important parts of these books have been translated by Professor C. Andler in the *Revue de Paris* of January 15, 1915, and the following are the main points:—

The General Staff says: "Inasmuch as the moral tendencies of the nineteenth century were pre-eminently guided by humanitarian considerations which often degenerated into emotivity or even sentimentality, there has been no lack of attempts to make the usages of warfare develop in a way that is absolutely contrary to the nature and aims of war itself, and the future certainly holds other efforts of the same sort in store for us, especially since the Geneva Convention and the Conferences at Brussels and The Hague have given them a moral sanction.

"By carefully studying the history of warfare the officer will be able to resist the influence of exaggerated humanitarian ideas."

Clausewitz observes: "Any one who uses force without any compunction and without sparing blood-

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shed, will get the upper hand sooner or later, unless the enemy does the same. The principle of moderation cannot be introduced into the philosophy of warfare without committing an absurdity."

General Hartmann says: "Practical militarism, in its own exclusive interest, absolutely requires precedence over all the demands which a scientifically constructed international law may be inclined to enforce. . . . When recourse has once been had to military measures, every limitation to acts of war tends to weaken the action of the belligerent as a whole. . . . International law must beware of paralysing military action by putting obstructions in its way. . . .

"War is by its very nature the negation of the principles upon which civilization and culture depend and of the laws which watch over their development; for it replaces them by a state of things which makes force and individual power lawful. If by civilization we mean the equilibrium of rights and duties which supports the social structure of the nations and which guarantees their institutions, the term *civilized warfare*, as Bluntschli uses it, is scarcely intelligible, for it involves an irreconcilable contradiction.

"It is necessary to afflict and injure the enemy in order to curb and break his will, and the unquestionable justification of such means lies in their efficaciousness, and in the fact that they enable one to make sure of attaining a precisely defined military object."

Von Blum writes: "Our undertakings should aim

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above all else at increasing the injury done to the enemy.

"The first method to be employed is the invasion of enemy provinces, not with any intention of keeping them, but for the purpose of levying contributions of war or merely of laying them waste."

Hartmann says: "The enemy State must not be spared the anguish and woe inherent in warfare. The burden must be crushing and must remain so. The necessity of imposing it results from the very idea of national warfare. . . . When a national war breaks out terrorism becomes a principle which is necessary from the military standpoint."

The theory of the right to levy requisitions is formulated by Clausewitz as follows:—

"Its only limits are the exhaustion, impoverishment, and destruction of the country."

The statements of the German General Staff on the subject of requisitions are very explicit:—

Hartmann says: "The system of requisitions comprises far more than the mere right to forage in an invaded district, for it involves the absolute exploitation of the whole district in every respect. . . .

"Consequently we assert, first and foremost, that military necessity need not distinguish between public and private property, and that the army may claim the right to take what it needs anywhere and in any way.

"Absolute liberty of military action is an indispensable condition of success in warfare. These are the principles with which exclusively military

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circles must oppose all attempts to obstruct such action by international laws of warfare. . . ."

These principles have been applied throughout the war with great severity by the Germans, who have been extremely indifferent to neutral complaints about the destruction of monuments which were considered the inheritance of mankind. This fact is shown by the following extract from an article which a German General wrote for a Berlin newspaper, and which is quoted in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* of December 15, 1914 :—

"We have nothing to justify, for everything that our soldiers may do to harm the enemy will be well done and justified in advance. If all the architectural masterpieces between our guns and those of the French went to perdition, it would be a matter of perfect indifference to us. . . . They call us barbarians ; but we laugh at such nonsense. At the most we might ask ourselves whether we have not some right to the name. Let no one say anything more to us about the cathedral of Reims or all the churches and palaces that will share its fate, for we do not wish to hear any more about them. If we can only get news from Reims that our troops have made a second triumphal entry, nothing else matters."

The Germans are astounded at the indignation with which neutrals regard their conduct, for they have simply obeyed theories which they thought it their duty to apply practically, and they cannot see that there is anything so very surprising about incendiarism and pillage. As Frederick the Great said long ago : "Pillage is not at all the same as theft."

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4. *Different Psychological Processes employed by the German Army.*

In warfare the Germans avail themselves of various psychological means, such as terror, surprise and night attacks, and so forth ; but all are derived from one and the same principle, which is to make a powerful impression upon the enemy's moral tone with the object of lowering it. I shall now enumerate the most characteristic :—

TERROR.—This is the fundamental psychological process which dominates the whole conduct of the officers in the German Army, and which is the source of all the massacres and incendiary crimes committed by them. We are to study its consequences in another chapter, so that I shall merely mention them here.

From the beginning of the war the Germans have endeavoured to terrify the enemy. They have shot or tortured a large number of inoffensive civilians in order to frighten the others, and have put the finishing stroke to the effect thus produced by levying such immense contributions that the survivors were stripped bare. If the enemy can be influenced by destroying monuments which he is fond of, they are bombarded until nothing is left of them but ruins. We know how carefully this system was carried out in most of the Belgian towns and villages. The whole population was assembled at a given place, where a certain number of civilians were shot and the houses were plundered and then

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burnt. These things were done openly and the officers gloried in them, as M. Andler says :—

“ In a proclamation addressed to the municipal authorities of Liège, and dated the 22nd of August, General von Bülow, alluding to the sack of Andenne, said : ‘ It was with my consent that the Commander-in-Chief caused the entire town to be burnt and that about one hundred persons were shot.’ ”

These savage Generals are only continuing Germany's ancient modes of warfare. In the twelfth century Frederick Barbarossa almost always had one hand of each of his prisoners cut off, and when he had pillaged and afterwards burnt Milan he ordered all the inhabitants who could be seized to be put to death. In Sicily his son caused prisoners to be flayed alive or blinded. Such conduct has always been customary among the Germans. In 1622 Tilly massacred all the inhabitants of Heidelberg and burnt the city, and in 1631 he sacked the town of Magdeburg, destroyed fifteen hundred houses and six churches, and burnt most of the inhabitants alive. M. Savarit says :—

“ It should be pointed out that by committing such atrocities the Germans have almost always forced their adversaries to make reprisals in kind. The stern Louvois was greatly reproached for the famous *instructions* which he issued with regard to the Palatinate ; but they were occasioned solely by the German cruelties, which had appalled the left bank of the Rhine. In fact, Louvois said, ‘ We must outdo the Germans in inhumanity if they will not make up their minds to fight honourably.’ ”

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The German General Staff looked for no pre-text to justify its conduct until it saw the effect produced upon neutrals. Then it asserted, but probably without very great hope of being believed, that the priests and young girls in Belgium had gouged out the eyes of the wounded.

NECESSITY FOR CARRYING THE WAR INTO THE ENEMY'S COUNTRY.—If such methods as the foregoing are to be employed with impunity, the war must obviously be carried at once into the enemy's country, and this is accordingly one of the basic principles of the German General Staff. Its practical application naturally involves a lengthy previous preparation, such as the building of strategic railways, the minute study of mobilization details, and so forth. The Germans were so anxious to be first in invading the enemy's territory that they violated the neutrality of Belgium, notwithstanding the risk of a war with England. As a matter of fact, it is an immense advantage to carry the war into the enemy's country, for the special reason that it greatly facilitates the feeding of the army and allows the invader to enrich himself by pillaging the conquered. A German newspaper indicates these two points as follows:—

“The whole work is carried out in accordance with the one principle of bringing as little as possible from Germany for the needs of the army, of procuring as much as possible from the conquered enemy's country, and of sending everything that can be utilized back to Germany.

“For three months four-fifths of the army's requirements have been provided for out of the

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occupied territory, and even now, although these sources are beginning to produce less abundantly, they are still supplying our army of the West with three-fifths of what it needs. On the average we calculate that Germany has thus been saved from three to four million marks per day.

“ These gains of victory are still further increased by the returns of the economic warfare which we have waged against the conquered territory, in conformity with international law ; I mean to say, by our utilization of the immense resources which we have taken to Germany from Belgium and Northern France, and which consist of supplies for forts, cereals, woollen stuffs, metals, and wood. What Germany saves or makes by this economic warfare, which we are conducting with intelligence and business ability, may be estimated at six or seven million marks daily, and the sum total of the profits accumulated behind the Western front of operations since the beginning of the war may be calculated at about two milliards.”

To affirm that the fact of carrying the war into the enemy's country offers great advantages is such a truism that one hardly ventures to utter it ; and yet French statesmen ought to have been obliged to hear it constantly during the forty-five years' leisure which was granted them to organize our defence. If they had pondered upon it they might perhaps have had some idea of protecting the northern frontier of France. A few of the trenches which, as experience has proved, are almost impossible to capture, and which in any case would have been capable of repelling an invasion for

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a long time, would have sufficed for the purpose. All the foreign military textbooks taught how important they were, and their strength was proved in the Russo-Japanese War.

ATTACKS IN MASS FORMATION.—In order to obtain the results which I have just mentioned—that is to say, the immediate occupation of the enemy's territory and the terrorization of the enemy himself—one must not only be the first to reach his country, but must invade in force. The Germans were able to do so in both France and Russia.

As I have said before, this operation requires a lengthy preparation, for such an invasion is accomplished, not only by means of the active army but by the help of all the reserves. We have as yet no positive information on the subject, but it is probable that France was invaded by an army of two million men.

At a later phase of the war the Germans could not invade in force, but they still continued to throw great masses of troops upon a given spot, and at the first battle of Flanders whole army corps were pushed forward in close columns, despite all the trenches. By these tactics the German army lost more than a hundred and fifty thousand men in a few days, but if the attempt had been successful it would have meant the taking of Calais, with all its consequences. The stake was worth the risk.

VARIOUS METHODS OF INTIMIDATION.—The German General Staff neglects no measures which are capable of affecting the enemy's moral tone, but employs night attacks, asphyxiating gas, bombs dropped from balloons, and so forth. Experience

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had already shown that some of these operations, like bombardment by means of balloons, could do no material damage, so that the moral impression was all that was attempted.

With regard to psychological effect, one of the most useful of these German performances was the bombardment of some small towns on the English coast by cruisers which had succeeded in eluding the rather inadequate surveillance of the British fleet. It was a very dangerous undertaking, because there was a risk of encountering the enemy's battleships, or the terrible mines which can sink a boat in a few minutes ; but on account of its importance the Germans did not hesitate to attempt it. Its material results could not be otherwise than insignificant, but its psychological influence was considerable ; for, according to the figures given by *The Times*, it probably resulted in reducing the contingent which the English were at that time proposing to send over to France by six hundred thousand men.

As a matter of fact, the success of this attempt gave all Englishmen a dread of invasion, which even in Napoleon's time was a nightmare to them, and they accordingly decided to protect themselves from a possible investment by keeping at home a portion of the army which they were preparing to send upon the Continent. At the risk of a few ships the Germans decreased the number of their enemies by six hundred thousand.

The bombardment of the English coast was therefore clearly a psychological operation, and we must put into the same category the sinking of liners

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like the *Lusitania* and the consequent death of twelve hundred of her passengers. In the latter case, however, the Germans made a stupid mistake by not foreseeing that this work of destruction, of which many American citizens were victims, would cause such intense indignation in the United States as almost to result in war, and would lose them the few friends they still possessed in that country.

SURPRISES.—Whatever military operations they have in view the Germans always endeavour to accomplish them by surprise, and therefore they frequently resort to night attacks. A military writer has remarked very properly: "No danger is feared because of its potency, but because of the unknown which hides this potency. It is not danger itself, but doubt, which creates fear. Night encourages terror because it conceals surprise."

The Allies have often forgotten the important part played by surprise in military engagements. This was especially the case when they decided upon an attempt to force the Dardanelles, an operation which would have been easy if they had carried it out the day after Turkey declared war, for the Turks could not have withstood a simultaneous surprise attack by land and sea. But in place of striking a sudden blow they lost an enormous amount of time in discussions with Russia about the eventual ownership of Constantinople. It was counting one's chickens before they were hatched, and the only result was that the enemy had plenty of time in which to organize his defence. One of the English newspapers remarked very justly with

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regard to this matter that throughout the campaign the English and French had not shown much initiative.

Swift attacks made while two countries are still at peace are also resorted to for the sake of obtaining the moral effect of surprise, as we have seen more than once in modern warfare. A characteristic type of this method was the aggression of the Bulgarians, at the time of the Second Balkan War, against their former Allies, the Greeks and Serbians. It failed because the assailants had overestimated their strength, and also because those whom they attacked were commanded by a General who met them, not with a defensive but with a counter-attack, or, in other words, opposed one surprise to another, and the Bulgarians, who had counted upon the confusion of their enemies, were soon demoralized. Self-confidence is a good thing, but there must not be too many illusions about the strength one ascribes to oneself, nor must one think that the enemy will act according to one's own—usually erroneous—ideas of his mentality.

I shall not go any farther into the study of the part taken by psychological factors in modern warfare. I have already had an opportunity of showing their influence when I investigated some of the characteristics which have been brought out during the war, and the facts which I have mentioned show that all material agents, as I must say once more, are ruled by psychological forces in the last analysis.

CHAPTER II

APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLES LAID DOWN BY THE GERMAN GENERAL STAFF. INCENDIARISM, SLAUGHTER, AND PILLAGE

1. *Accounts of Slaughter, Incendiarism, and Pillage according to the Notebooks of German Prisoners*

THE slaughter, incendiarism, and pillage of which I am about to give short examples are the result of methods which were resolved upon beforehand by the Germans and set forth by them in various publications, and are based upon terror, which they consider a firm foundation.

The accuracy of the facts related will naturally always be exceedingly difficult to demonstrate, for the Germans, of course, deny them *in toto*. But the same proofs occur so often, are in such close agreement, and are derived from such different sources, that it would seem impossible to controvert them as a whole, and at all events, the notebooks found on German prisoners contain certain admissions. M. Bédier has pointed out many of them.

In a case of this sort the value of the proofs depends more upon their source than upon their number. For instance, we are sure that the Assyrian

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kings were accustomed to put out the eyes of their prisoners with their own hands, simply because they took pains to have themselves depicted upon the bas-reliefs of their palaces in the act of doing so. The admissions of the German notebooks have a similar documentary value.

Most of the German atrocities will certainly be known in detail some time or other by the accumulation of circumstances which escape all foresight, as we shall see when we find how the German Catholics themselves set their hearts upon proving that the acts of cruelty with which the Belgian priests were charged by the Germans had, as one rather suspected, no foundation in reality.

We shall now examine the crimes attributed to the Germans, beginning with those recorded in the prisoners' notebooks, and selecting only the most typical cases. The following are a few which were translated by Professor Bédier and published in the *Revue de Paris* of January 1, 1915. The names of those who are responsible for these accounts and the numbers of their corps and regiments are given in his work :—

“ 3rd September, 1914, at Sommepey (Marne). Horrible carnage, the village burnt to the ground, the French thrown into the blazing houses, civilians and all burnt together.”

A Saxon officer's notebook :—

“ 24th August. The charming village of Gué-d'Hossus (Ardennes) has been given up to be burnt, although it is guiltless, as it seems to me. They tell me that a cyclist was thrown and that his rifle discharged itself as he fell. Shots were then fired

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in his direction and *thereupon all the male inhabitants were simply thrown into the flames.*"

Another :—

" In this way we destroyed eight houses, together with their inmates. In one of them two men and their wives and a young girl of eighteen were bayoneted. I almost pitied the little creature, she looked so innocent ! "

Another fragment of a notebook :—

" 25th August (in Belgium.) Three hundred inhabitants of the town were shot. The survivors were requisitioned as grave-diggers. You ought to have seen the women then ! "

Some of the soldiers had treated the prisoners kindly, so General Stenger, who commanded the 58th Brigade, gave his troops the following order on the 25th of August :—

" To date from this day no prisoners will be made any longer. All the prisoners will be executed. The wounded, whether armed or defenceless, will be executed. Prisoners, even in large and compact formations, will be executed. Not a single living man will be left behind us."

The *Revue des Deux Mondes* has published other extracts from these instructive notebooks. The following is one of the most striking :—

" On the 23rd of August some soldiers, who were styled *franc-tireurs* from their uniforms, were seized and placed in three rows so that one shot should kill three men at a time. We took up our position along the Meuse. Our men acted like vandals. Everything was in confusion. The sight of the corpses of the inhabitants who had been killed

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beggars description. Not a house is left standing. We took all the survivors, one after the other, from every nook and corner of a convent which we burnt, and shot them all, men, women, and children."

M. Paul Hazard, an Interpreter Officer, has also translated a great number of notebooks, from which I give the following extracts:—

"18th August. Burnt a whole village. Shot eight of the inhabitants."

Another notebook:—

"25th August. We shot the inhabitants of the village: about fifty."

Still another:—

"19th October; in the evening, quartered at M—. We shot some civilians. You can have no idea of what Belgium looks like now. Most of the villages are completely destroyed. Everything is burnt. The parish priest is always the first in the village to be shot; but the chaplains are not spared either. . . ."

No case is so bad that it will not admit of denial; but it will be difficult for the Germans to gainsay facts which have been related by their own soldiers.

2. *Accounts of Slaughter, Incendiarism, and Pillage according to various other Documents.*

Actions which are recorded in official documents as the result of investigations, or which are borrowed from other sources, are not, of course, as valuable in point of authenticity as the admissions of the interested parties quoted above, but are,

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nevertheless, corroborative testimony, and for this reason I shall now relate some of them. The following is an extract from the report of an official commission which inquired into the massacres at Dinant :—

“ After accomplishing their work of destruction and robbery, the soldiers set fire to the houses. The town was soon an immense brazier. In short, Dinant is destroyed. It contained fourteen hundred houses, of which two hundred only are standing.

“ . . . The Commission has a list of the victims of the Dinant massacre. It contains almost seven hundred names, but is not complete. Among the dead are seventy-three women and thirty-nine children of both sexes, ranging in age from six months to fifteen years.

“ Dinant had seven thousand six hundred inhabitants. One-tenth of the population has been put to death ; there is no family without some victims, and many have totally disappeared.”

The *Temps* of November 30, 1914, gave horrible details concerning the conduct of the Germans at Dinant :—

“ Whole families were shot. To save time two machine-guns were brought into action and they mowed down hundreds of civilians, men, women, and children, who had been massed in the open street.”

Cases of massacre and of torture inflicted upon prisoners are innumerable. The *Temps* of December 31, 1914, gives the following facts :—

“ On the 6th of September the cavalryman Backelandt was disarmed. He was bound and his

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abdomen was ripped open with bayonet thrusts. At Tamines a French officer was tied to the trunk of a tree and a horse was fastened to each of his legs. At a signal the horses were whipped. It was quartering in all its horror! 'I saw,' said the witness, who was still trembling—'I saw his red trousers tear and the body burst asunder.'

The same newspaper reports that several women and children were soaked in petroleum and burnt alive at Badonvillers.

The *Figaro* of January 26, 1915, gives the following account of a refugee from Longwy:—

"They bound the feet of an old man and then hung him by the wrists to a door with a wire which cut into his flesh and drew screams of pain from him. The poor old man screamed for almost twenty hours before he drew his last breath."

Among the most bloody devastations of Belgium was the sack of Louvain and the massacre of part of its population. Many accounts of it have been published, but I wish to draw special attention to that of a Swiss citizen, M. Füglistner, who was living in Louvain at the time. The following are some extracts which were published by the *Journal de Genève* of May 5, 1915:—

"The massacre and conflagration commenced by signal and at an hour which had been settled in advance. The horror was unutterable. The troops soon got shockingly drunk and gave themselves up to the most shameful excesses. The officers were in command, and M. Füglistner heard them say, 'Kill every one and burn everything.' It is still impossible to give exact figures, but the popu-

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lation was forty-three thousand, and there are not more than twenty-one thousand people left in Louvain.

“ M. Füglistner testified personally to a series of peculiarly dreadful atrocities. He has the proofs and is keeping them. The known limits of the horrible are enlarged by the things which happened in this place.”

Sadism alone can explain actions like those which M. Lenotre has gathered from official documents :—

“ At X— 182 persons were shot, one young man was buried alive, head down and with his legs outside the grave, so that his tormentors might not lose the sight of his writhings during his protracted death-agony, and a Belgian soldier who was taken prisoner had his hands boiled.

“ Seeking a suitable place for a general execution, the Prussians dragged a crowd of weary women, peasants, and weeping children along the road ; from time to time they stopped, and the unfortunates, thinking it the appointed spot, embraced one another for the last time before they were to die. But it was not to be as yet ; they were to go farther, and their captors urged them on with whips and the butt-ends of rifles. At last an officer ordered them to halt, lined up his men, the rifles were lowered, and he said with a sneer, ‘ Take a last look at your beautiful country.’ ”

In order to exculpate themselves for these cruelties the Germans allege that the inhabitants fired on them first ; but this pretext will not serve to justify the horrible tortures inflicted upon the thousands of Russians who were at various Ger-

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man baths when war was declared. An account of them will be found in M. Rézanoff's book, of which a summary is given in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* for August 1, 1915. In this case there is no question of furious outbursts on the part of the populace, but of actions committed by educated people of every class, and especially by officers. Young girls were stripped naked and violated in the sight of their relatives, who were shot at the slightest sign of protest. Many of these unfortunate creatures committed suicide in their despair, or went mad. These sinister occurrences show the sadic ferocity of the German temperament in a way that admits of no denial. Among the persons tortured were several consuls, who were thrown into prison cells, where they are probably languishing to this day.

The fierce and plundering propensities of the Germans have, however, been a matter of remark in all wars. In 1807 Wellington wrote of the German regiment which was then serving under the English flag against Napoleon :—

“ I can assure you that from the General to the smallest drummer-boy in the German regiment they are one and the same. The earth never groaned under the burden of more bloodthirsty and infamous ruffians. They have assassinated, robbed, and ill-treated the peasants wherever they have gone.”

The soldiers whose crimes I have just enumerated are, therefore, merely continuing an old tradition. The German invasion of Belgium reminds one in every particular of the Teutonic incursions which

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took place in the first centuries of the Christian Era. Then, as now, the Germanic peoples filled their own country with the innumerable swarms of their progeny, and when they found that the land could no longer support them, poured like a flood into the territories of their neighbours. On several occasions the Romans made great slaughter of them, but it was not enough. The Emperor Probus is said to have exterminated four hundred thousand of these barbarians, but when he arrived on the scene they had already demolished the marvellous monuments of Roman Gaul. A century later they began their ravages again, and devastated Gaul, Spain, and Italy. To-day Germany threatens to become the scourge of the world, as she was once the scourge of the Roman Empire.

The religious monuments of Louvain, Soissons, Reims, and Arras could never have been destroyed without the direct permission of the Emperor. Their demolition shows the result of the intense hatred which he feels for Catholicism, and which he manifested long ago in a letter written to one of his relatives who had become converted to that faith. "I hate the religion which you have embraced," he wrote, "and I look upon its destruction as the supreme object of my life."

One of his speeches, published by *La France* of October 3, 1914, reads as follows:—

"The Catholic churches of Papal Romanism, which we are told to admire immoderately, are sometimes an insult to the Almighty. They insolently neglect God for imaginary saints, who are really idols substituted for the Deity by Latin super-

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stition. In the cathedral of Reims French kings who were adulterers are actually deified in a way, and represented under the form of statues which are placed above the great doorway and are given a better place than the image of God.

"German teachers who are worthy of our race ought never to describe such churches without making an indignant protest against Papist superstition."

These lines help to explain the animosity of the Germans against the ancient cathedral.

3. *Austrian Atrocities.*

During the first invasion of Serbia the Austrian soldiers were no milder than their German comrades in Belgium. Professor Reiss of the University of Lausanne went to Serbia, and there made an investigation, whose results appeared in the *Revue de Paris* of April 7, 1915. The following items with regard to the kind of cruelties practised by the soldiers under the orders of their officers are taken from his report:—

"I have observed the following kinds of mutilation and slaughter: the victims were shot, bayoneted to death, their throats were cut with knives, they were violated and then killed, they were stoned, hanged, beaten to death with the butt-ends of rifles or with clubs, were disembowelled or burned alive; their legs or arms were cut off or torn out, their ears or noses were cut off, their eyes were put out, their breasts were cut off, their skin was cut into strips or their flesh was detached

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from the bones, and, lastly, a little girl three months old was thrown to the pigs."

Every one will recall the similar charges that were brought against the Balkan nations during their wars with the Turks and their subsequent struggles with one another. It was then alleged that they were semi-savage races which had been accustomed to live for centuries by massacring one another, and that only the Turks could keep the peace between them. But since the same arguments cannot be applied to the Germans, we must acknowledge that the highest form of civilization does not make men less barbarous. All our old humanitarian ideas are forced into the background, and there they will remain for a long time to come.

4. *The Psychology of Terror. Its Disadvantages.*

The German General Staff justifies its policy of murder and incendiarism by the necessity under which it lay of terrifying the inhabitants of the country, and thus inducing them to ask for a cessation of hostilities.

Terrorization has always been employed by revolutionaries no less than by kings, as a means of impressing their enemies, and as an example to those who were doubtful about submitting to them, while the infliction of torture also satisfies the blood-thirsty atavistic instincts which exist in many men. We must therefore expect to find this method employed from the earliest historical periods, and, as I have said before, the Assyrian bas-reliefs show that the kings themselves put out the eyes of

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prisoners, and allowed the soldiers to perform **only** the more complicated operations of flaying them alive and carpeting the city walls with their skins.

I have also called attention to the fact that the early Romans professed the same theories as the Germans of the present day with regard to invaded nations and the treatment that should be applied to prisoners. In their opinion any action that was advantageous to the conqueror was a good action, for they held on principle that the stranger was an enemy who had no rights, and that none could fraternize except fellow-citizens, or at the most, fellow-countrymen.

This implacable obduracy and savage egotism were long Rome's law, but not always, for manners and customs grew less sanguinary towards the end of the Republic. No act of barbarity is mentioned in the "*Æneid*," and Cicero praises Marcellus for having spared the monuments of Syracuse, while he overwhelms the pillager Verres with his scorn.

The cruelties of the modern Germans have carried us back to the most remote periods of history, but although they have reduced murder, torture, and pillage to a system in the present conflict, it is not the first time that they have formulated their methods, since Bismarck had already asserted that war must be made extremely painful to the civil population for the sake of inclining it to the idea of peace. In 1870 he said:—

"True strategy consists in hitting your enemy and in hitting him hard. Above all you should inflict the maximum of suffering upon the inhabitants of the cities you invade, in order to sicken

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them of the struggle, and to secure their aid in putting pressure upon their Government to induce it to stop the war. To the people of the countries through which you pass you should leave nothing but their eyes with which to weep.

“Our guiding principle in every case is to make war so terrible to the civil population that they will themselves entreat for peace.”

We have seen with what fierce ardour the Germans have followed this advice, how they have set villages on fire and burnt women and children alive or subjected them to every kind of torture ; but these actions have had no result except the exodus of the inhabitants *en masse*.

It is useless to discuss the validity of such proceedings from the standpoint of law or humanity, but we may at least examine their consequences. Not only have all these outrages not been at all as effective as the Germans hoped, but they have proved a detriment by arousing feelings of the greatest wrath in all nations, and thus making enemies for their perpetrators throughout the world.

As a matter of fact, terror is never effective unless its action is very brief, and its prolongation makes it disastrous rather than advantageous. It not only imbues the conquered with a feeling of revolt, but with intense hatred, which is a powerful element of success in warfare ; for when an invaded nation knows that it cannot hope for mercy it defends itself to the last extremity. And not only does it defend itself, but it remembers. Before the war the Germans controlled a large part of Belgium's commerce, especially at Antwerp, and

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one may well ask what their position will be when peace is made. They would have been much more prudent if they had been gentler in their government of a country of which they aspired to make a permanent conquest.

Moreover, the systematic employment of cruelty requires a certainty that the enemy whom you have harassed will never enter your own territory and retaliate upon you; but no one can be sure of fixing the wheel of fortune—even Napoleon could not do it. If a hundred thousand Cossacks should enter Berlin one day, and should subject its old men, women, and children to the treatment which the Germans inflicted upon the unfortunate inhabitants of Dinant and Louvain, who would pity them?

5. *The German Defence.*

After they had systematically denied all the charges which were brought against them, the Germans at last made an attempt to justify their actions as mere reprisals for the very same crimes, which they then imputed to the Belgians and the French.

Every one knows that in a statement made before the Reichstag, the German Chancellor accused young Belgian girls of blinding the wounded, and according to the German Press, Belgian priests were also accustomed to gouge out prisoners' eyes and cut off their fingers. These assertions seemed very unlikely, but still it was a case in which mere improbabilities were opposed to precise allegations of fact, when suddenly a curious circumstance caused their complete collapse.

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There has always been a good deal of rivalry in Germany between Protestants and Catholics, and as the Protestants had fallen into the habit of charging the Catholics with all sorts of misdeeds, the latter in self-defence had long ago founded bureaux of inquiry—chief among them the *Bureau Pax*—which were entrusted with the duty of clearing up accusations against the Catholics of the Empire.

The German Catholics could not admit that priests of their religion had been guilty of the crimes which were ascribed to them, and so the *Bureau Pax* undertook a series of minute investigations into each case, and had no trouble at all in forcing the German authorities to acknowledge that all the actions with which the Belgian clergy had been reproached were entirely imaginary.

The Germans then said that the principal reason why they had burnt undefended cities, Louvain in particular, was because the inhabitants had fired upon their soldiers, for civilians must not meddle in war, according to them. The moment the matter touched German interests, however, the rule was reversed, as is shown by the following proclamation which was sent to the part of East Prussia that had been invaded by the Russians, and which was published in the newspapers :—

“When the enemy crosses the frontiers of the German Empire there will follow a struggle for national defence, during which all methods are legitimate. The duty of every man able to bear arms is to drive back the invaders and to harass them when they retreat. The entire population

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must take up arms in order to give the enemy no rest, to seize his munitions, to stop his supplies, to capture his scouts, to destroy his ambulances and field hospitals by every possible means, and to kill him by night."

6. Psychological Lessons to be learned from the Employment of Terroristic Methods.

The same sort of murder, pillage, and incendiarism that was employed by the Germans and Austrians had been seen before, as I have already remarked, in the two Balkan Wars. Such merciless methods of warfare seem to spread increasingly, and to carry us back by gradual steps to the remotest periods of history.

It was a great mistake to think that the progress of civilization could transform our feelings by developing our intellects, for nothing of the kind has taken place. Social restraints partially conceal the ancestral barbarity of certain nations, but it is merely disguised, and when these restraints are removed it reappears.

It reappears in the educated classes as well as in the illiterate, and it is easy to understand why this is so if one keeps in mind how widely character and intellect are separated, and how slight an influence education exerts upon feeling. As soon as the social restraints disappeared the officers and private soldiers of the German Army were on a level with one another, and under the sway of the same savage instincts.

At more than one period in history refined culture

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has been associated with the most bloodthirsty cruelty. Instances of this fact are seen among the Italian lords of the Renaissance during the Borgia period, and in the Mogul emperors, who were poets, artists, and scholars, who catalogued the stars and invented instruments for measuring the obliquity of the ecliptic, but who nevertheless made pyramids with the decapitated heads of their prisoners.

The general spread of German methods does not reassure one with regard to the future, for, as the *Spectator* says :—

“ If modern warfare is not to recognize any rules henceforth, then truly the future of the human race is a very dark and precarious one.

“ If mankind as a whole coldly accepts what Germany has done as being an inevitable law of necessity or a normal operation of warfare, it will really be difficult to prevent Germany's enemies from paying her back in her own coin.”

It is certain that in all future wars the nations will be forced to adopt the German methods and to be merciless in their turn, for an army which should obey international Conventions like those of The Hague would be weak indeed when confronted by one which had no concern for such things.

The retrogression of humanitarian ideas is very perceptible, as has been shown quite easily by comparing the proclamations of the German officers, and their incessant talk of incendiarism and massacre, with the orders which Bonaparte gave his army when it was about to invade Italy in 1796.

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It will readily be observed that all conceptions of a general nature, like socialism, humanitarianism, the Hague Conventions, and others which are intended to modify international relations, have had no influence whatsoever. Apparently they have gone into permanent bankruptcy.

It is to be hoped that when all the atrocities have been completely verified they may be collected into a special book, the reading of which shall always form a part of primary education, for the inhabitants of the provinces which border upon Germany ought never to forget what a German invasion means. If they had been better informed they would have compelled their representatives to insist that the Government should construct adequate fortifications for the defence of the northern frontier of France, and the richest part of the country would not be in ruins to-day. Besides, a book of this sort would prevent a new pacific invasion on the part of Germany after the war. It will be impossible to break off all commercial relations with the Teuton, but we should always remember that he is the irreconcilable enemy of our civilization and our race, and that he must be kept at a distance.

CHAPTER III

EFFECTS OF GERMAN METHODS OF WARFARE UPON NEUTRAL FEELING

1. *Psychological Effects of German Methods of Warfare upon Neutral Opinion*

THE world-wide protests evoked by Teutonic methods of devastation and massacre left the Germans very indifferent at first, for, as they were acting in accordance with established principles, they had no idea of bothering about neutral opinion. At last, however, the increasing torrent of condemnation aroused them, and the German Government began to realize that although might may crush right, the abuse of it breeds an accumulation of enmity which becomes a power in its turn.

The violation of Belgian neutrality had already cost Germany the formidable animosity of England, and the question now was whether it was worth while to irritate the other Powers, and especially America. It had obviously been a psychological error to indulge in acts of cruelty which produced no military advantage, and so much savagery had made it impossible to talk about the benefits of Teutonic hegemony and culture.

As soon as the Germans realized their mistake

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they endeavoured to change public opinion by means of newspapers, lectures, and pamphlets, but, unfortunately for them, the current of hostility had set in with such strength, and the acts of devastation which had been committed were so difficult to deny, that the earlier impression which had been produced could not be obliterated. Even they themselves were at last obliged to acknowledge the small success of their propaganda, as the following extract from the *Kölnische Zeitung* bears witness :—

“ It must be confessed that the Germans, and especially the Prussians, do not win hearts, with all their gifts. The psychological insight which penetrates the feelings of other nations is not the Teuton's strong point. The efforts which Germany is now exerting through the Press with the object of winning the sympathy of neutrals are a trifle late in making their appearance, and are not always characterized by the most perfect tact.”

I shall now recapitulate some of the protests which have been made in all quarters of the globe by persons of the highest distinction. My summary is not a useless recrimination, but will, I hope, make nations that may in future be tempted to imitate the German methods realize what condemnation they will incur by so doing, and what enmity they are likely to arouse.

The age of chivalry is no doubt gone for ever, but mankind would be carried back to the darkest periods of primitive savagery by the final abandonment of certain laws which perhaps public opinion alone may be able to restore to life.

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2. *Impression Produced in America.*

I shall first quote some remarks from one of the most illustrious personages in America, ex-President Roosevelt, who writes as follows in the *New York Times* of November 8, 1914:—

“Belgium has done no wrong whatever, and yet her territory has been invaded and her people brought under the yoke.

“There is equal proof as to the bombardment of open cities, though this plainly runs counter to the Hague Agreement forbidding the bombardment of open cities.

“Articles 43 and 50 expressly prohibit collective penalties, pecuniary or otherwise, which punish the inhabitants of a country for acts committed by persons for whose conduct they cannot be held responsible. Either this prohibition has no bearing at all or else it applies to such penalties as the destruction of Visé, Louvain, Aerschot, and Dinant. Moreover, it is with the object of spreading terror, and not of inflicting punishment, that recourse has been had to the frightful, systematic devastation to which part of Central Belgium has been subjected. This is expressly forbidden by the Hague Conventions.”

In the *New York Times* of October 20, 1914, Professor Eliot says:—

“Public opinion here is deeply moved by the German methods of warfare. To the American people nothing can justify either the dropping of bombs upon cities inhabited by non-combatants, or the burning or blowing up of quarters of

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unfortified cities, or the destruction of precious monuments and art treasures, or the sowing of floating mines in the North Sea, or the exaction of ransom extorted from cities under the threat of destruction, or the arrest of unarmed citizens, their detention as hostages for the peaceful conduct of entire populations, and their summary execution when disorder breaks out."

The President of the celebrated Carnegie Institute, Mr. A. Church, writes in reply to the manifesto of the German intellectuals, sent him by a certain Dr. Schaper, of Berlin :—

"It arouses my pity to see how importunately the Germans are striving to win the good opinion of America.

"Oh, Dr. Schaper, if the conditions should ever be reversed, if foreign soldiers should march through the streets of Berlin, and the citizens should see their houses destroyed and the inhabitants massacred, would you and the ninety-three intellectuals not fire upon the invaders without any mercy?

" . . . All the gold you could give France and Belgium in a thousand years, and all the prayers of expiation you could offer up every hour for a thousand years, would not make amends for the ruin of two nations by fire and blood, or dry up the oceans of human tears which have flowed over them together with your horrible invasion.

" . . . There was no excuse for making this war. Armed and defended as you were, the whole world could never have broken through your frontiers. Your great nation sailed its ships on all the seas, sold its wares in the most distant parts of the earth,

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and enjoyed the greatest favour from all men because they had confidence in it as a humane State. But all this good opinion is gone to-day. In fifty years you cannot win back the material and spiritual advantages which you have lost."

Among the very few Americans who were present at the devastation of Belgium we may mention Mr. Dawell. His appalling memories are summed up in a book, from which I give the following extract:—

"In many parts of the world I have seen many terrible and revolting things, but never anything as frightful as Aerschot. I am not exaggerating when I say that two-thirds of its houses had been given over to the flames, and bore visible traces that they had been looted previously by a maddened soldiery. The proofs of crime were everywhere. . . ."

3. *Opinion in Switzerland and other Neutral Countries.*

In a part of German Switzerland public opinion was at first favourable to the Germans, but it turned entirely against them when their massacres and incendiarism in Belgium came to be known.

The following is an extract from an article published in the *Bibliothèque universelle de Genève* by M. Rossel, a Swiss Federal Judge:—

"The invasion of Luxemburg, despite the solemn guarantees of 1867, and the violation of Belgian territory, despite the equally solemn guarantees of 1831, are offences for which there is no excuse.

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The sea might pass over them and yet not wash them clean.

“When States no longer respect their signature, a thing that private individuals consider sacred, all civilization is in danger. Whom and what shall we trust in international intercourse? What are treaties worth if they are governed by no other law but that of the stronger? Are the monstrous and detestable examples of antiquity enough to justify the violations of to-day? Have nineteen centuries of Christianity and all the conquests of science and all the progress of the law and all the masterpieces of art been in vain? Can victory itself blot out the indelible stain? Even though Germany's brow be garlanded with a wreath of laurel, on the day that she comes to herself she will hang her head to think of the *deutsche Treue* [the German loyalty] which was her pride.”

As I have said before, it really seems that the Germany of our day is passing through one of those mystic phases which delude an entire nation and make discussion impossible. The author of an article published in the *Journal de Genève* of November 6, 1914, shows this very clearly:—

“Discussion is impossible with one who maintains that he is not seeking truth, but already possesses it. For the time being, the strongest mind cannot break through the thick wall of certainty behind which Germany is barricaded from the light of day. It is the horrible certainty and pharisaical satisfaction of that Court preacher who glorifies God because He has made him sinless, upright, and pure, and not only himself, but his Emperor, his

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ministers, his army, and his race, and who rejoices beforehand, in his righteous indignation, at the destruction of all those who do not think as he does.

" . . . And on the other hand, when the clearest minds of Germany, the historians and the scholars who are accustomed to the study of texts, base their certainty upon documents which are all derived from one party, and refer us for proof positive to the interested assertions of their Emperor and their Chancellor, like good little schoolboys whose only argument is *Magister dixit*, what hope is there of convincing them that there is a truth beyond their schoolmaster, and that we not only have the *Weissbuch*, but all sorts of books of every colour, whose testimony must also be heard by an impartial judge?

"Between the Teutonic spirit of to-day and that of the rest of Europe there is no longer any point of contact.

"Germany seems to be smitten with a morbid excitement, a collective madness, for which time is the only cure. Medical diagnosis for similar cases shows that such forms of delirium develop rapidly and are suddenly followed by periods of the deepest depression."

Among the various articles of Swiss origin I shall give a passage from the one entitled *Public Opinion in Switzerland*, published by Professor Henri Poggi in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* of April 15, 1915. In it he shows how the Swiss people, who sympathized with the Germans at first, were afterwards roused to indignation against them by their acts of vandalism. If the Germans had

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been better psychologists they would have realized that although it may be a great pleasure to burn and massacre, the satisfaction of doing so sometimes involves vexations which outweigh the pleasure :—

“ From the beginning of the war a general hue and cry against the Germans has been raised amongst us on account of the violation of Belgian neutrality, and the cynical speech delivered by the Chancellor to the Reichstag as an excuse for it. It is true that just at first a large part of the population and many newspapers in German Switzerland were pro-German, as it was natural for them to be on account of their racial affinities, the influence of the great commercial interests involved, and the ties of amity and relationship which bound them to the German nation.

“ . . . After the frightful cruelties committed in Belgium and France, after the sack and destruction of Malines and Louvain, and the crowning horror of the abominable attack against the cathedral of Reims, both the public opinion and the Press of German Switzerland have largely changed, and have raised many eloquent protests. Even Professor Vetter, who had been the greatest Pan-German of all the Swiss up to that time, sent a very forcible open letter to the German intellectuals after the sacrilegious crimes of Louvain.”

Holland, Denmark, Norway, and the other neutral countries have not expressed opinions as frank as those of America and Switzerland, for they are so near Germany and feel her menace so much that they have not been able to write freely. The

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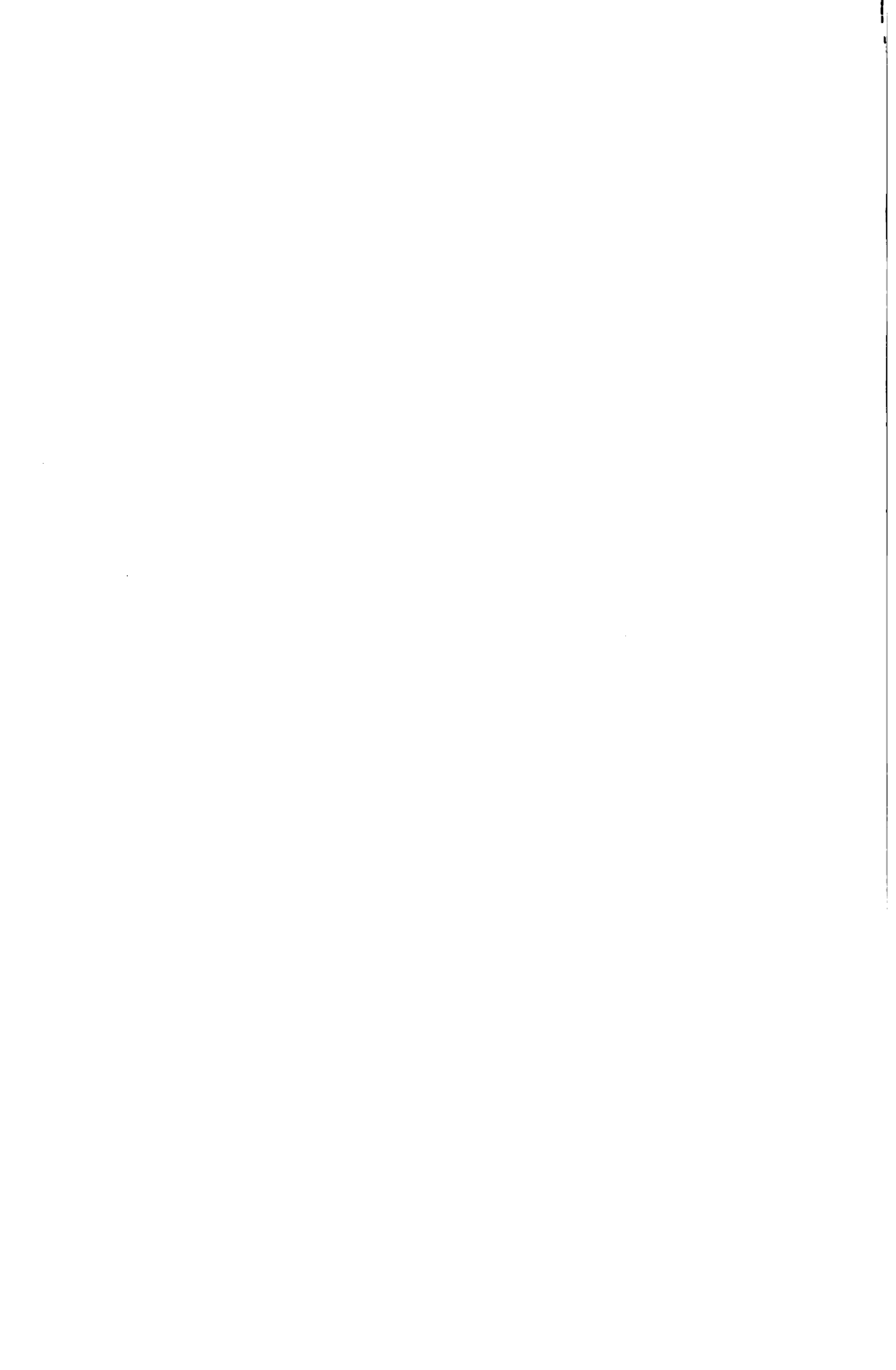
example of Belgium has been enough to make them hold their peace.

Public opinion in Spain is sharply divided. At the beginning the Catholics openly sided with Germany, as I have already remarked. But Ramon y Cajal, the most celebrated scholar in Spain, has publicly expressed an opinion from which I quote the following extracts :—

“ Our cave - dwelling ancestor pillaged and murdered openly and ingenuously, without calling upon anthropological theories to help him torture his victims ; but when the invaders of to-day feel strong enough they write deeply philosophic and learned books, which are meant not only to justify their crimes and iniquities, but to show the world that they are a superior race and can do anything they like.”

The author does not believe that either of the belligerent groups will be completely crushed :—

“ Those who are conquered will think only of imitating the methods of the conqueror and endeavouring to conquer in their turn, and when the orphans of to-day have reached man's estate the terrible massacre will begin again.”



BOOK VII

UNKNOWN QUANTITIES IN WARFARE

CHAPTER I

IMMEDIATE CONSEQUENCES OF MODERN WARS

1. *Present and Future Incidences*

MODERN wars involve innumerable consequences, whose reverberations echo for years to come. Almost half a century has gone by since the defeats of 1870, but they still weigh upon the economic and social life of France.

To show the manifold incidences of the European War would be impossible at the present time, and I shall therefore confine myself to a brief sketch of what experience has already taught us with regard to the complications, probable cost, losses, and psychological consequences resulting from modern warfare.

No other great historical conflict has brought such formidable elements into play, and hence none can have given rise to like effects ; but these effects, both material and psychological, are so confused that they cannot as yet be clearly distinguished.

2. *Complexity of Modern Warfare.*

It was a very simple matter to supply the needs of an army in antiquity, as for instance among the Romans, for every soldier brought his arms

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and most necessary provisions, the latter consisting of almost nothing but a small quantity of flour, with which he prepared his own food when he could not find anything to eat in the countries through which he passed. If a city was to be besieged, the requisite engines of war, such as catapults, towers, and so forth, were built on the spot from the trunks of trees.

A modern army, with its enormous number of effectives, its artillery, and its supplies and equipment, is a travelling city, containing factories, storehouses, workshops, post and telegraph offices, hospitals and cantonments, all of which are situated behind the lines and are indispensable to operations at the Front.

The extent of the battlefields at the present time, and the movements of troops required by military tactics, render a complicated system of railways and motor transport absolutely necessary for getting supplies to the soldiers and evacuating the wounded.

An army corps of forty-five thousand men, together with the twelve thousand horses and two thousand wagons which accompany it, occupies about thirty miles of road, and requires a hundred trains to transport it.

The department of communications is of paramount importance. The Russian reverses were mainly due to its inadequacy, while on the contrary, the General in Command of the Austro-German Army owed his easy victory over the large numbers of Russian troops who confronted him to the swift manœuvres by which he transported his own forces from place to place.

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All orders come from Headquarters, which for an army corps consists of fifty officers, three hundred private soldiers, two hundred horses, and thirty-five wagons.

Every corps is an independent unit, and as it carries only a week's rations, there must be a complicated system in its rear for keeping it supplied with food, and above all with munitions. The Generals in command of the various armies are distributed over a line which is several hundred miles long, and receive their orders telegraphically from the Generalissimo.

The important part played by railways in modern warfare is shown by the fact that ten thousand trains were steaming back and forth across France during the twenty days of mobilization.

After the battle of the Marne the French Army attempted to outflank the German right wing, which of course answered these tactics by a similar manœuvre. During the six weeks which it took our troops to execute this movement, and which ended in the battle of the Yser, the whole English Army and a part of the French forces were transported by train from the Aisne to the Yser. "Six thousand trains carried seventy divisions over distances which varied from sixty to 375 miles."

What we have just been examining are the complications of the transport problem alone; but if we think of all that is involved in supplying several millions of men with food and munitions, we will realize that the foreign and domestic life of a country at war must be profoundly disturbed. All its factories and similar establishments will have no

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other occupation than to provide nourishment and military supplies for the troops at the Front, so that there will be a great decrease in exports, and consequently in national wealth.

This is what is now taking place in France as well as in Germany, for in both of these countries exports have fallen off enormously. On the other hand, many commodities have to be purchased abroad, and this increases imports to a large extent and thus leads to impoverishment, for importation means expenditure, because money must be sent abroad if goods are to be received in exchange, while exportation means receipts, because when products are sent out of the country the money which represents their value is brought in. Importation without any corresponding exportation therefore means spending without earning any profit to balance one's outlay.

In ordinary times Germany exports wares to the value of about four hundred and eighty millions sterling and imports more or less the same amount, while during the war she has exported very little and has imported a great deal through neutrals; and to balance this large excess of imports over exports she has been obliged to make heavy loans and to send a great quantity of gold abroad. This emigration of the precious metal cannot long continue, for in a country which is not exporting the stock of gold is very soon exhausted.

I shall here conclude the section treating of the material incidences of warfare, as it tends to lead me somewhat far afield from psychological phenomena.

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3. *Effects of Warfare upon the Inhabitants of a Country.*

War affected only a small part of the population in antiquity, except perhaps during the periods when great invasions were taking place; for the means of communication were so scanty that natives of different provinces were almost strangers, and, moreover, only a limited number of troops were engaged in ancient battles, so that the civil populations suffered nothing unless they lived on the enemy's line of march.

The conditions of modern warfare are entirely different. The armies, which in former times seldom exceeded a hundred thousand men, are now composed of many millions, and these hordes of soldiers spread over every part of a country by road and rail like a swarm of locusts, and lay it utterly waste. Only a few departments of France have been invaded, but they are absolutely ruined. According to figures given by the Germans themselves the value of their plunder amounted to eighty millions sterling in the first few months of the war, and M. Henri Masson, of the Court of Appeals, estimates the Belgian losses alone at two hundred and sixteen millions sterling for the first eighty-two days of the war.

At present Belgium is entirely destitute, for the brutal devastation which was carried out at the start has given place to systematic pillage by means of requisitions so graded as to deprive the country of its last remaining resources.

The destruction of Belgium and Northern France

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has absorbed the attention of the public and the Press ; but other important countries, like Poland, Galicia, and Armenia, have been subjected to the same treatment.

With regard to Poland I may quote the following extract from the *Journal de Genève* of June 5, 1915 :—

“ The war has overspread three-fourths of Poland. The Austro-German forces now occupy two-thirds of its territory and rule over thirteen millions of its inhabitants, and it is said that five thousand villages and two hundred cities and towns have been bombarded, laid waste, or burnt.

“ . . . There are no more railways and consequently there is no more commerce. The great coal, sugar, and textile industries of Poland, and the petroleum output of Galicia have come to an abrupt end. Poverty, famine, and epidemic disease are universal, and those who have gone to the spot to relieve the suffering say that the losses of the civil population are greater than those of the battlefields.”

If war leads to such results in the most civilized countries, one may fancy what the situation must be in districts where the invader is under no restraint. In that case there are no bounds to the massacres and destruction of every kind. A correspondent writes from Khoppa on the Black Sea to the *Corriere della Sera* :—

“ A colossal and unknown tragedy is taking place. The whole of Western Armenia is in mourning for the devastation and the massacres and the hopeless misery to which it has been subjected. The cities are cemeteries. Trebizond, which looked

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upon the glory of Alexis Comnenus, is half destroyed and its inhabitants are fleeing."

It is obvious that we have gone back to the period of the ancient barbarian invasions, but while their modern counterparts are quite as merciless they spread over a far more extensive area.

4. *Losses in Men.*

The immense loss of life during the present war far surpasses the slaughter resulting from the most famous battles of history; but it is difficult to give the exact figures as yet. The French Army Commission has obtained the following statistics, which include the losses of France up to February 15 and May 1, 1915:—

	February 15	May 1
Killed	186,541	327,000
Wounded	415,863	592,000
Missing or Prisoners	243,321	317,000

These figures do not include the losses for the battle of Arras, which took place in July 1915 and in which there were 113,000 casualties, or those for the battle of Champagne, which occurred in September 1915, and in which there were more than 100,000. Even admitting that half of the wounded return to the front, we may still estimate the French casualties at about a million men in a year.

The Germans have probably suffered much more severe losses, because they have been obliged to fight on two fronts, and also because they attack in mass formation. Their casualties are estimated at more than two millions.

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A combination of all the figures submitted by each belligerent in turn leads to the conclusion that the total losses during the first year of the war cannot have been much less than six million men. This estimate does not include a million soldiers, six hundred thousand Russians among them, who are prisoners in Germany. In this awful war the flower of the European youth will have perished.

The Napoleonic Wars did not cause such slaughter in the space of twenty years. The enemy's losses at Jena and Wagram were less than thirty thousand men, and only at Leipzig, which was the greatest battle of the First Empire, did the Allies lose sixty thousand soldiers.

What was once a great battle is now considered a mere brush at an outpost and occupies a line or two of an official bulletin. But although the engagements of the present day are important with regard to the loss of life which they entail, they are not followed by the same practical consequences as were the battles of former times, when one or two general actions decided the fate of a campaign; for thirty thousand men are now sacrificed in order to capture a hillock or a few trenches, but the final result is almost *nil*.

5. *Expenditure involved in Modern Warfare.*

There has never been such a costly war as the present gigantic conflict.

Mr. Lloyd George told the House of Commons that the monthly expenditure of England alone was forty million pounds sterling; while during the

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Napoleonic Wars, which occasioned the most lavish outlay of any known up to that time, Great Britain spent only eight hundred and forty millions in twenty years. The Crimean War cost less than eighty millions, and the Boer War a trifle more than two hundred millions.

On a peace footing the armaments of the last forty-five years have certainly cost many millions more, but they were a premium of insurance against attacks from without, and, enormous as they were, experience has shown that they were inadequate, for when the war broke out it was discovered that the French and English preparations were altogether insufficient. The ten French departments which have been laid waste by the Germans, and hundreds of whose factories and monuments are in ashes, represent a far greater sum than would have been required by an equipment of sufficient magnitude to withstand the invader.

In a speech delivered before the Reichstag on August 20, 1915, Herr Helfferich, the Secretary of the Treasury, said that "the expenditure of a single month is a third greater than the entire sum disbursed during the War of 1870." The credit of eight hundred millions which had been voted was exhausted and a new loan had to be raised.

Artillery and munitions are among the heaviest items of expenditure in modern warfare. A dreadnought burns nineteen tons of coal per hour when going at full speed, and it costs more than two hundred thousand pounds to fire the hundred and fifty shots which her twelve guns can discharge in the space of two hours. The cost of one shot

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from a twelve-inch cannon is over two hundred pounds, and even a modest shell for a "seventy-five" gun costs about twenty-four shillings.

The following calculation was made by an expert for the *Matin* of July 19, 1915:—

"According to a French communiqué of the 17th June our artillery on the north of Arras fired three hundred thousand howitzer shells in twenty-four hours, or almost as many as were discharged by the whole German field artillery in 1870 and 1871.

"We may estimate the weight of these three hundred thousand cannon shots at four thousand five hundred tons. This means that it took more than three hundred large lorries or more than six railway trains to transport them from one place to another, while conveyance by road would require more than four thousand six-horse wagons. The expense involved amounts to about three hundred and seventy-five thousand pounds."

To this expenditure of nearly four hundred thousand pounds in a few hours was added the loss of one hundred and thirteen thousand men in a few days. Such figures give one a clear idea of what modern warfare costs.

The incidences of the European War have been multiform and unexpected. In October 1914 Sir William Ramsay, the celebrated chemist, called attention to the fact that Germany was using a thousand tons of cotton per day for her munitions, and that the war would inevitably have ended in April if the importation of this raw material had been prevented from the start. We may add that if the English mining strike had been prolonged,

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the Allies would not have been able to continue the war for lack of sufficient coal to supply their factories and railways.

An immense amount of unemployment has been one result of the war. The French Government is obliged to grant relief to 3,253,367 families of men who are mobilized. On the 30th of June, or in less than a year after the outbreak of the war, these persons had received more than fifty-two millions sterling, or almost one-third of the annual Budget of the French Republic in time of peace.

The cost of the war is shown by the enormous increase in the Budget, which in June 1915 had already absorbed nine hundred and sixty millions sterling, two-thirds of this amount being devoted to exclusively military expenditure, and the rest being appropriated to the purchase of food for the people (seven million four hundred and eighty thousand sterling), and interest on the public debt (fifty-seven million and eighty thousand sterling). But even this amount does not by any means represent the sum total of the losses due to the war, for the pillage of the richest departments of France has rendered them enormously more onerous.

By June 1915 four million nine hundred and forty thousand acres, containing a population of three million two hundred and fifty thousand, had been invaded and laid waste by the enemy's progressive advance. The money value of the land occupied is almost four hundred millions sterling, while that of the buildings, and especially the factories, of the district is far greater.

In order to defray all this manifold expenditure

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the belligerents have been obliged to raise loans, a process which can be repeated until the wealth of the people and the metallic bank reserves are exhausted ; but the nation to whom this day of reckoning comes, as come it must, will be forced to give up the struggle.

The economic factor will no doubt prevent the European War from lasting as long as those known by the names of the Thirty Years' War, the Hundred Years' War, and so forth ; for battles are now fought not with cannon-balls alone, but with the golden bullets of millions, and this sort of warfare cannot be prolonged for the simple reason that the wealth of a nation is limited, nor can a fresh war break out until the combatants have been enabled to reorganize their resources to a limited extent by the interposition of a brief and evanescent period of peace.

6. Length of Modern Wars.

It is probable that the present war, like its successors, will be brought to a close through the influence of economic rather than of military factors, for trench warfare prevents either army from gaining any great advantage over the other, and slowly consumes them both by defensive tactics. The force which wastes away the soonest is the one which will be vanquished.

That the wars of the French Republic and the Empire lasted for twenty years is no objection to my theory, for the means of destruction were then comparatively cheap, and much less deadly than they are at present. We have spent more money

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and lost more men in twelve months than was the case during the twenty years of the Napoleonic period.

The different wars which have followed one another for the last half-century have been of various lengths. The Crimean War of 1854 lasted two years, the Boer War of 1899 two years and a half, and the American Civil War five years ; but most of them have been much shorter. The Franco-Prussian War of 1870 lasted six months, the Russo-Japanese War of 1904 eighteen months, the Spanish-American War of 1898 four months, the first Balkan War of 1912 five months, and the second less than six weeks.

The most costly and sanguinary of all modern wars, and the only one with which the present conflict can be compared, was the Civil War between the Northern and Southern States of America. When it ended in 1865 the armies of the North numbered a million soldiers and those of the South seven hundred thousand, while the losses on both sides had reached more than a million men. The debt of the Northern States amounted to five hundred and sixty millions. The Confederates were absolutely ruined, and had liabilities of four hundred millions ; but such was the devotion to the common welfare that the Southern women contributed their jewels, and when every resource was exhausted proposed to cut off their hair and sell it in the European market. The conquerors gained little by their victory, as will no doubt be the case in the present war and those which may follow it.

CHAPTER II

DUBIOUSNESS IN ACCOUNTS OF BATTLES

1. *Value of Official Documents relating to Battles*

I HAVE no intention of attempting to describe the principal battles of the European War in the following pages, for I only wish to keep in mind a few of its psychological lessons, such as the important part played in great events by the unexpected and by the will, and to justify the thesis that it is almost impossible to know the exact truth about facts which have been observed by several thousands of people. The final result of such occurrences is known, but most explanations and interpretations of them are wrong, and, indeed, it is very doubtful whether we are acquainted with the real details of the most celebrated historical events, especially of those for which we have only documentary evidence.

During the present war the official reports of the various Powers have been inspired by different psychological principles, which can be referred to the following maxims :—

1. Suppress or conceal news of reverses.
2. Misrepresent the truth in such a way as to influence public opinion.

The first, which may be called the method of

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silence, has been used by both the English and the French, especially at the beginning of the campaign; the Germans have availed themselves liberally of the second, which consists in altering facts; and the Russians have taken advantage of first one and then the other. The method which confines itself to telling the precise truth need not be mentioned, for no one has employed it; but of course it is perfectly natural that enemy forces should conceal their defeats and exaggerate their victories.

As a matter of fact, the reader who finds utterly contradictory statements in the bulletins of the different countries ends by losing all confidence in them and trusting only to results. For instance, the Russian communiqués which announce the capture of large numbers of prisoners and machine guns make little impression upon him when he finally learns that the conquerors have evacuated strategical points of particular importance and are continually retreating.

The German bulletins are so untruthful that neutrals have no more confidence in them whatsoever. The *Journal de Genève* of April 10, 1915, says:—

“The more one studies the German bulletins the more one is astounded at all the false statements which have accumulated since the beginning of the war. They bulk much larger than one would have imagined at the time when they were published.”

The method of silence was rather overdone by the French General Staff at the beginning of the campaign, for its telegrams contained only the most

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unimportant news, and suppressed every word about a great battle like Charleroi. During the entire month of August 1914 the French people may be said to have known absolutely nothing of what was happening at the frontier. On the 29th of August a dispatch which said that the situation was unchanged from the Somme to the Vosges gave the first intimation that the Germans were in the former department, and not until the 1st of September was the public abruptly informed that a German cavalry corps was advancing on the forest of Compiègne, and that the Government was obliged to leave Paris.

One of the great disadvantages about the method of silence is that it cannot be kept up, for a certain amount of information must now and then be imparted to the general public. The writers of the bulletins which we are considering were obviously not very acute psychologists, and gave people too plain a view of the way in which they concealed the truth. For instance, we read that the Germans had retired from a village which we had never been told had been occupied by them, while wounded soldiers, foreign newspapers, Embassy Staffs, and so forth, talked about great battles of which our bulletins had said no word. The people soon saw that the most essential matters were being hidden from them, and when they learned that the Germans, who were supposed to be still at Lille, had entered Compiègne, were at the very gates of Paris, and intended to burn the city quarter by quarter in order to make us subscribe to peace at once, madness broke loose, and there was such a

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general stampede to the provinces as had not been seen in 1870.

If the truth had been gradually known from the beginning, public opinion would have slowly adapted itself. The disorder was increased by sinister newspaper stories, for although the censorship would not allow a single line to be published on matters of essential importance, it permitted the great dailies to expatiate at length upon such things as the burning of cities, the massacre of women and children, and the tortures inflicted upon prisoners. It was playing into the hands of the Germans, for they were very anxious that every one should know of their terroristic methods, by which they hoped to forestall and paralyse resistance.

When the battle of the Marne had put a stop to the German invasion and had given us a little good fortune, the Government still showed the same indifferent psychology with regard to the censorship of the Press. The places where fighting was going on and the numbers of the enemy regiments, which were things that the Germans must have known, were concealed from us, and gallant acts which might have raised the spirits of the public were passed over in silence. The heroic exploits which had saved the country seemed to have been performed by vague abstractions, and many months went by before our governing class discovered the enormous influence of mental contagion, and realized the necessity of proclaiming the feats of valour which had hitherto been kept secret. And yet such consolation for the civil population was

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not a negligible weapon, for it was of the utmost importance to dispel the fears and sorrows of non-combatants by recounting our first achievements. The deeds of heroes are the seed of heroism.

The silence which was imposed upon the Press appears to have been due in part to the really quite comprehensible fear of the influence which public opinion might have exerted upon the development of military operations. It was this factor which in 1870 compelled the most disastrous acts of the campaign, such as the appointment of Bazaine, MacMahon's absurd march on Sedan, and so forth. In the Spanish-American War public opinion appeared again and demanded that the Fleet should be sent to Santiago de Cuba, whose harbour had an exit so narrow that only one vessel could leave it at a time, and under the enemy's guns at that—a fact which led to the complete destruction of the Spanish Fleet by the American battleships.

How difficult a truthful description of the European War in its various vicissitudes is rendered by the deficiencies or inaccuracies of official information appears plainly enough from the preceding remarks.

2. *Value which may be attached to Accounts of Battles. Illusions of Generals. The First Battle of Flanders.*

In order to satisfy oneself of the slight value possessed by accounts of battles, it is sufficient to compare the different reports of those who direct them. Various psychological causes, among which

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are the desire of each General to appear as meritorious as possible, and the illusions which a feeling of this sort unconsciously produces in him, combine to deprive most narratives of battles of all but the most distant resemblance to the truth.

Even Generals who belong to the same side are capable of describing an engagement in a very different way, as may be seen from the reports of the first battle of Flanders. There is really no similarity between the account given by the French official *Bulletin des Armées* of December 5, 1914, and the report of Field-Marshal French, the Commander of the British Army.

According to the French bulletin the French Generalissimo devised the plan of the battle, and the English took only a secondary part in it, while the English report asserts the exact opposite. The following are a few quotations from the official French document:—

“But these things took time, and the British Army could not arrive upon a new scene of operations before the 20th of October.

“On the other hand, the Belgian Army, which had been fighting for three months, was out of munitions for the time being. The General in Command did not hesitate, however, but ordered that fresh exertions should be made.

“As early as the 4th of October he commissioned General Foch to proceed to the armies of the North and there arrange for future operations, and on the 18th put at his disposal the reinforcements which have been continually increased up to the 12th of November, and are to form the French Army

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in Belgium under the orders of General Durbal. This army, together with the Belgians and *one English army corps*, will henceforth operate between the sea and the Lys.

"In criticizing this period of the war the *Journal de Genève* says that the French military authorities have shown an unrivalled superiority in their swift and extensive transport service. These exertions have caused the total failure of the German attack in Flanders."

The English version is quite different, according to a summary of Field-Marshal French's report published by *The Times* of December 1, 1914:—

"We see very clearly that it was the Field-Marshal commanding the Anglo-Indian forces in France who first appreciated the gravity of the German movement in the North, and first took decisive measures to arrest it. It was on his initiative that the Army under his command was dexterously withdrawn from the Aisne, bodily transferred to the North, and placed athwart the German line of advance on Calais. . . . It was he who remained deaf to clamour and to the doubts of less resolute men, covering with his troops large fronts out of all doctrinal proportion to the number of combatants at his command. . . . Let us, however, make haste to acknowledge the unfailing support which our Commander received from his French comrades. . . . Generals Durbal, Maud'huy, and de Castelnau have proved themselves to be veritable heroes in the field."

According to this account it appears that the

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French simply rendered useful aid to the English Field-Marshal.

Was this the way in which matters really happened? Did it require the intervention of the English General to foresee and arrest an invasion which might have cost France so dear? There is only one thing certain about it, and that is that this battle, which the Germans lost, was one of the most sanguinary in history, for the enemy probably had no less than a hundred and fifty thousand men put out of action, and the British and French armies fifty thousand.

It will no doubt be a very long time before we shall know the truth about this period of the war, but we must admit that the French Army Bulletin has not always been very accurate, and that its satisfaction has occasionally been somewhat premature, as a *Temps* correspondent remarks :—

“ In estimating the operations which are now taking place, the fact is too often forgotten that the chief object of strategy and military manœuvres is to guarantee the integrity, honour, and life of a nation, and as the Teutonic hordes are slaying and violating from Reims to Mézières, and from Lille to the Argonne, the optimism at present exhibited seems to me strange, to say the least.

“ By their offensive the Germans have conquered the whole of Belgium, with the exception of a small fragment, and have occupied our northern and north-eastern departments, which latter must be estimated as a sixth part of France in point of population and wealth. The most conservative statistician would value the French losses in land,

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houses, furniture, factories, mines, railways, roads, and works of art at about twelve hundred millions sterling. And what are we to say of the dead, and of the ignominy and defilement of the invasion? Some writer observes that the German invasion has *brought in no returns*. What more does he want?"

But even though the results are dearly bought, they are nevertheless undeniable, and when we look back to the dark days at the end of August 1914, and compare them with the present situation, we cannot help according our gratitude and admiration to the patient, tenacious, and magnificently courageous army, which has been a miraculous bulwark to protect us against a terrific invasion.

I need not dwell upon these results here, for my aim is simply to show how difficult it is to obtain information about a battle. Each General of an opposing army, and sometimes even each one of the same army, proclaims the truth as he sees it, and though all these various versions deal with the same facts, they are often very unlike. The different accounts of the origins of the battle of the Marne will give us another very typical example of this fact.

CHAPTER III

HYPOTHESES CONCERNING THE BATTLE OF THE MARNE

1. *The Beginning of the Campaign. The First Reverses*

WE shall probably never know what psychological illusions led the French General Staff to suppose that the Germans would attack France from the east, when so many military writers had shown that they would come from the north.

General Bonnal remarks very properly, in one of his brilliant articles, that the whole plan of the German offensive against France was explained in Bernhardt's *Vom heutigen Kriege* (vol. ii., p. 337), of which a French translation appeared in 1913. The right wing of the German Army was to advance on Calais via Belgium, exactly as it attempted to do.

It was therefore an easy matter to see through Germany's plan, which was to throw great masses of men into France across a poorly protected part of the country, to take Paris in haste, to force the conclusion of peace, and then to turn back and attack Russia.

Two million Germans invaded the country with these objects in view. The French had only a million and a half men with whom to confront

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them; but even this number might have been enough for purposes of defence if the Generals had not most unfortunately dispersed their troops over a front which was more than three hundred miles long, and which, in any case, had enough fortresses to protect it perfectly. It was the same error which had been committed in 1870, but this time it was even more inexplicable, since it was easy to foresee that the invasion would take place via Belgium, and the maps published by *The Times* in the middle of August 1914 showed that there were only three or four German army corps in the east, while all the rest were concentrated in the north and north-west.

This error of foresight on the part of the French General Staff had dreadful consequences. The mistake was realized at last, and troops were hastily conveyed from the eastern border to the Dinant-Charleroi-Mons front; but it was too late. The battle of Charleroi, which lasted from the 20th to the 23rd of August, had a disastrous outcome, and on the evening of the 23rd of August the Generalissimo ordered a general retreat. It began on the 24th of August, after the battle of Charleroi had been lost, and was very much in the nature of a rout. The retreating soldiers have horrible memories of it, for the German Army, marching thirty miles a day, kept at their heels and gave them no respite.

The story of the retreat was told in *La France* of November 10, 1914, by one who took part in it, and many officers have since assured me that the account is perfectly true:—

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"Then came the retreat, and what a retreat! . . . We went straight on, night and day, never stopping, and without any idea of where we were going. We fell in with soldiers who did not belong to even the same corps as ourselves; all the different arms of the service were jostling one another, and there was a general mixture of cavalrymen on foot without their horses, stray artillerymen, and infantrymen on horseback. I marched for five days before I found my regiment. . . ."

The Germans pursued without the loss of a moment. On the 3rd of September von Klück's army had reached the Nanteuil-Creil-Senlis line, and the situation of the French appeared desperate.

2. The German March on Paris. Systematic Plans for burning the City.

The plan of the Germans to get possession of Paris was based upon psychological as well as strategical grounds. The seizure of the French capital would have had an immense moral effect, and in their opinion would have brought about the immediate end of the war. When they had occupied Paris it was their intention to make the Government conclude peace at once, so that they would not need to linger over a long campaign in France, as they had been obliged to do in 1870, but might be free to send two million men against the Russians, whose mobilization was not completed.

According to the concurrent testimony of German officers who are now prisoners of war, the German

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General Staff had discovered only one means of obtaining this indispensable result, and that was to burn one quarter of Paris after another, together with all the inhabitants of each, until the French Government should have concluded peace. All our information is in agreement with regard to this matter, and Paris would have suffered the fate indicated by Senator Trouillot and Professor Lavissee. The former says in *La France* of April 2, 1915:—

“The seven quarters into which Paris was to have been divided after its occupation by the enemy were condemned to be utterly destroyed, one after the other, according as the country refused to entertain the idea of the so-called peace that would have meant its irretrievable ruin. And this time the enemy’s object would have been attained, for Paris would have disappeared from the face of the earth.”

The version of M. Lavissee in the *Revue de Paris* is the same:—

“Paris was to have been treated as a hostage. It appears that they intended to divide the city into quarters, and to warn our Government that if it did not consent to discuss the preliminaries of peace by a certain day one quarter would be blown up, and if the delay were protracted another quarter would be destroyed, and the rest in turn. We know now without any manner of doubt that they were perfectly capable of destroying Paris. As one of their Teutonic ancestors said—I think it was the Vandal Genseric—‘Something impels me to burn Rome.’”

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The prisoners who have been questioned explain these designs by saying that there was no other way of forcing the French Government to conclude a peace, which was absolutely necessary for the German plan of turning the army back to attack Russia. Considering the theories of the German General Staff, no hesitation would have restrained them.

3. Hypotheses with Regard to the Origins of the Battle of the Marne.

We now come to what is, perhaps, the main point of our history for a thousand years, since the destruction of Paris by the Germans would no doubt have been a more important factor in the world's development than was the taking of Constantinople by the Turks. It would have ended the moral existence of France, whose mutilation would have debased her to an absolutely inferior position, and would have caused her to succumb to the sorrow and shame of not having made better preparation to withstand the foe.

But the fate which had led us to the brink of the abyss did not allow us to disappear in it, and the causes which averted our dire peril may one day be invoked against the theory of the supposed fatalities of history. It is we who create these fatalities. Their birth often depends upon our will, and, as we are about to see, a tiny incident may save the life of a nation at a given moment.

The Germans were at the gates of Paris.

The Generalissimo feared that by arresting the

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retreat of his army it would be caught between the two hordes of Germans who were streaming in from the north and from the east. The only way in which he could avoid being surrounded was by retiring to the south of Paris ; but that meant giving the capital up to destruction. What was to be done?

His position seemed desperate, when various circumstances led him to give battle on the Marne : the day was won and Paris was saved.

So far the facts are absolutely certain, and may be reduced to the simple statement that the battle of the Marne was won. But let us suppose that an historian carries his investigations further, and asks himself in the first place why the Generalissimo offered battle in place of adhering to his original plan, which, as his orders to the Army show, was to fall back far to the south of Paris ; and secondly, why General von Klück, who was at the gates of Paris, abandoned the attack and went off to the east.

Let us start with an examination of the official accounts published in the newspapers, although they do not by any means throw much light upon the problem. The following is an extract from the *Bulletin des Armées* :—

“ Since the 4th of September, when the Army reached the line that the Generalissimo had established as the extreme limit of his retreating movement, it has become hardened and inured to warfare by a fortnight of incessant combats, as is proved by its local successes while it was falling back. Our retreat is therefore undoubtedly voluntary,

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well-considered, and intentional. Our Staff has retained full liberty of manœuvring, and General Joffre was perfectly free when his order was issued to the Generals in Command of the various armies to take the offensive on the 6th."

The daily Press of course improved on this narrative, and one paper said with regard to the Generalissimo :—

" His whole system is shown in his preparations for the battle of the Marne. All the orders for the engagement, which began on the 5th of September, were written by his own hand, and were ready by the 27th of August. He had separately considered and arranged the various phases of the battle, as though they were the parts of some delicate mechanism, and at a given hour it started like the movement of a watch."

Statements of this sort were very agreeable to the general public, and for this reason one cannot find fault with them ; but even the least circumspect mind finds it only too easy to criticize them, for, as a matter of fact, one need not press the point to demonstrate that the headlong flight from the Meuse to the Marne was not " a voluntary, well-considered, and intentional retreat." Such obvious exaggerations justify remarks like those made by the *Journal de Genève* on December 18, 1914 :—

" It is amazing to see how difficult it is for the truth to make its way, even when it concerns the most undeniable facts of every kind. To mention only one example, there are many people who still believe that the Generalissimo of the French Army

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had determined from the beginning of the war to entice the enemy into the neighbourhood of Paris in order to defeat him on the Marne. The latter victory was a sudden and superb resumption of the offensive on the part of an army which had just suffered a series of very perceptible reverses ; but it was not the plan of the French General Staff to entice a million Germans into home territory and to deliver the richest provinces of France to devastation and ruin."

All conquered peoples make the same assertions with regard to the voluntary character of their retreats, and, as the same newspaper very properly adds :—

" Many a battle has been broken off voluntarily during this campaign, as all the belligerents have asserted in turn. If one reads the Austrian bulletins, for instance, one discovers that all their most important defeats have been due to their own free will. The Serbians abandoned Belgrade voluntarily. The Germans retreated voluntarily at Anspach in Alsace and at Béthune in Flanders ; and a glance at the files of the French bulletins would no doubt reveal statements of similar voluntary actions. Such are the demands of the moral factor."

This shows that no accurate opinion can be formed from newspaper reports, so that the questions we asked in the beginning are still unanswered. The first of them was, why a General who wished to fall back to the south of Paris arrested his retreat and offered battle instead.

We are here entirely in the domain of the un-

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known, and I dare say many books will be written to clear up the question, but two hypotheses may be formulated temporarily.

The first theory is that the Government intervened with the object of inducing the Generalissimo to stop the retreat.¹ The second is that the Generalissimo hoped to take advantage of the swerve to the east of General von Klück's army, and suddenly decided to attack it. On the 4th of September, as a matter of fact, he issued an order in which he said: "It is advisable to turn the precarious situation of the First German Army to account by bringing the efforts of the Allied Armies on the extreme left to bear upon it. All arrangements will be made during the 5th of September with a view to attacking on the 6th."

These two hypotheses of Government interference and the utilization of von Klück's swerve to the east are not irreconcilable, and by combining them we may get very close to the truth; but then we have to answer the last important question: Why did the German General, who was at the

¹ By his general order No. 4 of the 1st of September, the Generalissimo directed his troops to fall back south of Paris, as far as Bray on the other side of the Seine. The Fifth Army was to retreat to the south of Nogent-sur-Seine.

On the 2nd of September the General in Command told the Minister for War: "It is impossible to organize a line of defence upon the Marne, according to General French's proposal," and by order No. 3463 to the armies, he announced that he was retreating in order to save the troops from the pressure of the enemy and to enable them to fortify positions for themselves in the zone which they were to occupy at the end of the retreat, on a line traced through Pont-sur-Yonne, Nogent-sur-Seine, Arcis-sur-Aube, Brienne-le-Château, and Joinville.

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gates of Paris, relinquish his plan of attacking the city? This we shall now investigate.

4. Hypotheses as to why the German Army retreated instead of marching on Paris.

The retreat of the Germans, when they were within two days of Paris and their advance-guard was at Pontoise, is the greatest mystery of the war. To the devout it seems a veritable miracle, but it may be traced more simply to strategical and psychological factors.

To begin with, I think we may quite exclude the hypothesis that the German General was obeying the rule that before attacking any fortified place an army capable of defending it must be disposed of; for he was so well informed of the enemy's doings that he must have known the French Army was ordered to fall back far to the south of the capital, and hence must have felt sure that there would be no force to oppose his march on Paris. He was absolutely certain of being able to enter the city. Why, then, did he stop?

This question, too, can be answered only by hypotheses, of which the following is the most likely. The German General thought that he could increase a fame too lightly won in the conquest of an undefended capital by the loftier glory of taking in one cast of the net a whole army which was isolated in the east, because of the fact that the English had been overwhelmed at Compiègne and had been obliged to retreat.

In order to surround this army he swerved to the

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east; but at the same time General Maunoury's heterogeneous army, which had been got together on the spur of the moment, and of whose existence the German was consequently unaware, was marching towards him, and he found that he was exposing himself to a flank attack, for, as he had been sure that no offensive¹ would be attempted, he had merely protected his exposed flank by a corps which took up its position north of Meaux.

On the 3rd of September, General Gallieni, the Governor of Paris, learned that the heads of von Klück's columns, which had already reached Nanteuil, had turned to the south-east in the direction of Meaux and were proceeding towards the Marne. General Gallieni clearly perceived the advantages of the situation, and by his orders Maunoury attacked the ill-defended German wing on the 5th of September and attempted to take it in the rear at Nanteuil-le-Haudouin. For four days he fought between the Ourcq and Nanteuil against a succession of reinforcements sent up by von Klück, who had soon realized his mistake. This was the crux of the battle. Maunoury in his turn was threatened with being surrounded, so he began to weaken and fell back to the north of Nanteuil, when on the

¹ It is to this unexpected attack by an improvised army whose existence was not suspected that the Germans ascribe their defeat. The newspaper *Die Post* says in its number of the 12th of September, 1915: "This plan, which was perfectly proper from the tactical point of view, would have succeeded if von Klück's project had not been reduced to naught by the unexpected intervention of two armies coming from Paris and operating to the north of Meaux. This sudden apparition of a very superior force could not have been foreseen by the German General."

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night of the 9th to the 10th of September von Klück retreated—why, no one really knows to this day.

From a military standpoint von Klück cannot be blamed for this manœuvre; but he will surely be censured for not having protected his right wing near Meaux by a more adequate force. As soon as he saw that Maunoury had taken up a position on the Ourcq with a view to getting on the flank of the German Army's line of march, he became apprehensive of being surrounded, and sent two army corps to strengthen the threatened wing. He thus escaped the disaster which would have followed the surrounding of his exposed army corps; but his whole line was disorganized, the general retreat of the Germans was the consequence, and as their wing began to give, General Foch succeeded in driving a part of the centre into the swamps of Saint-Gond.

It does not appear that the entire German retreat was simultaneous, for the forces to the left of the semicircle between Meaux and Sézanne retreated on the 10th, and those in the centre, towards Sézanne, on the 13th, while the Crown Prince's army, which lay to the east, did not begin its retreat until the 15th.

The Germans' last retreating movement was made so quickly that it was thirty-six hours before the French knew it, or realized that they had won. If they had pursued their success and kept close at the enemy's heels, without giving him any respite, they would probably have driven him back to the frontier, or, if not as far as that, at least to the east

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of Reims, and that ancient city would have been saved from an appalling bombardment and the destruction of its cathedral.

I shall not give any details about the battle of the Marne itself, because I know nothing of them, and probably no one has any accurate knowledge concerning them as yet. The future alone will, perhaps, explain how the French victory came about; but even now we may assert that it was not only a collective achievement, due to the valour of our soldiers, but a combination of lucky accidents as well.

At present, the only statement we can make with certainty is that the battle of the Marne was the greatest one of any age. It was fought in an immense semicircle, whose length is about one hundred and fifty miles, and which stretches from Nanteuil-le-Haudouin, fifteen miles north of Meaux, where Maunoury's army lay, to a little below Verdun. This semicircle included Meaux, Coulommiers, Sézanne, la Fère-Champenoise, and Vitry-le-François.¹

¹ "Everything that was demanded of us has been accomplished," writes General Mallerre, "and it would need volumes to relate the heroic deeds, individual and collective, which marked the victory of the Marne. Taking all of them together, does it not seem that there was something greater than military tactics in this change of destiny? An immense army, which believed itself victorious, and which was advancing in all the intoxication of triumph, was put to rout by soldiers who had suffered the triple ordeal of defeat, retreat, and hunger.

"But if their bodies appeared exhausted, their hearts had not failed. And here was the miracle—the miracle of national energy the miracle of the valour of the race, the miracle of the martial tradition of France."

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The French armies which took part in this battle contained more than a million men, while the German effectives were probably somewhat more numerous. It lasted ten days, from the 5th to the 15th of September. The German losses were estimated at one hundred and fifty thousand men, and the French cannot have been much smaller.

The battle of the Marne, which saved Paris from destruction, must be considered as the most important event in the annals of France, and is one more demonstration of the fact that the human will can sway the supposed fatalities of history.

CHAPTER IV

PEACE PROBLEMS

1. *Difficulties in the Way of Peace*

THE problem of peace will bristle with difficulties which are not yet apparent to everybody; but one need only consider the hypothesis most favourable to the Allies in order to make the fact plain. Let us suppose that the mysterious decrees of the divinities to whom devout men pray enable us to advance a hundred miles every month instead of a hundred yards; let us also grant that the two or three million Germans who now stand between Berlin and Paris are wiped out, and that we have reached the capital of Germany and can dictate our laws there. Would all difficulties be removed? By no means.

The sagacity of a Machiavelli would not be adequate to foresee the line of conduct that should be followed under the favourable circumstances which we have just supposed to exist.

No matter what hypotheses we consider, whether we advocate the division of Germany into a number of provinces, obligatory disarmament, a crushing indemnity, or any other plan, we must still come to the conclusion that to prevent attempts at revenge on the part of seventy million

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men we must maintain a mighty army for an indefinite period, and even this will not put a stop to them. After the battle of Jena, when Napoleon was absolute master of Prussia, he was confronted by a similar problem, and was unable to solve it. He believed that he had crushed Prussia, and yet a few years afterwards Prussian generals entered Paris as conquerors.

If the question is not solved in some unexpected way, we may be sure that we are at the beginning of one of those prolonged struggles, broken by truces, which have often occurred in history. The Thirty Years' War and the Hundred Years' War are examples; only the battles to come will be far more ruinous and sanguinary than those of former days.

Unless the ruling ideas of the peoples change, the European nations must apparently resign themselves to fleeting and evanescent periods of peace, and to make even these last for such a short time as ten or fifteen years, the belligerents will have to be so weakened after their defeats that they will not be able to recommence the struggle immediately.

It is probable, therefore, that the present war will cease only when one of the combatants is utterly ruined. It is not a new solution of the problem, for the same thing has taken place several times in history, and particularly in the American Civil War, as Mr. W. Eliot remarks:—

“Americans can never forget the five years of the Civil War, which was conducted with determination on both sides, but came to an end only when

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the South's resources in men and supplies were exhausted. The whole capital of the Southern States was swallowed up in that terrible crisis."

An unsettled peace would in any case be more disastrous for the Allies than a continuation of the war. Any one who doubts this need only be reminded of the conditions laid down by Count Bernstorff, the German Ambassador to the United States :—

" His starting-point was the principle that France must be reduced to the position of a nation like Portugal, even if five million Frenchmen had to be killed, and going into details, he proceeded to dismember France, robbing her of fifteen million inhabitants who live east of a line extending from Saint-Valéry to Lyon, and adding them to the Belgian provinces, which were of course to become German. Germany was to make us pay an indemnity of four hundred millions sterling, was to abolish our frontiers and disarm us, was to make France abandon England and Russia by forcing her to ally herself with her conquerors for twenty-five years, and lastly, William the Second was to buy Russia and crush England."

The desiderata of the German nation with regard to peace conditions are frankly expressed in a secret memorial which was presented to the Imperial Chancellor on May 20, 1915, and which was signed by the great German manufacturing and agricultural associations :—

" Belgium must be economically subjected to Germany. From the borders of Belgium to the Somme the French coast districts must become a

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part of the German Empire. Germany will seize all the fortresses on the eastern frontiers of France, especially Verdun and Belfort. The carboniferous regions of Northern France and the Pas-de-Calais must belong to Germany. All persons owning property in these districts are to be expelled and their lands occupied by Germans. Poland and the Baltic provinces are to be taken from Russia."

This memorial of the industrial leaders was fully sanctioned by another manifesto to which the names of many professors were appended, and which went a step farther in a demand for the seizure of all the French Colonies. That the German peace conditions involve the ruin and spoliation of the vanquished we also know from the last speeches delivered in the Reichstag by the Chancellor and the Finance Minister. Sir Edward Grey comments upon them as follows :—

"Germany is to be above all, and the other nations are to enjoy only such liberty as she may grant them. These are the conclusions of the German Chancellor's speech. And the Finance Minister adds that a heavy burden of many millions must be borne for decades, not by Germany, but by those whom she is pleased to stigmatize as the instigators of the war. In other words, it is Germany's intention that for many decades to come all the nations which have withstood her must toil to pay her tribute in the form of a war indemnity."

The *Vossische Zeitung* said with regard to the speech which the Imperial Chancellor delivered in the Reichstag on August 19, 1915 :—

"As we are the greatest of nations it is our

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duty to lead the van of humanity, from now on. To be deferential towards peoples who are our inferiors is a sin against our mission."

The *Journal de Genève* of September 4, 1915, published a very typical remark of a distinguished German personage on the fate of Alsace after the war :—

"The Alsatians must lick our feet after the war."

All the facts which I have just mentioned should be brought to the notice of those few persons who wish for peace, and one cannot over-praise the words which were spoken by the President of the French Republic at the commemoration ceremony for Rouget de l'Isle on July 14, 1915, and which show a very real appreciation of the situation :—

"What would happen to-morrow if a sorely spent and halting Peace could seat herself upon the rubbish-heaps of our ruined cities? A new treaty of draconian severity would at once be forced upon our weakened energies, and we should for ever be the political, moral, and economic vassals of our enemies. French manufacturers, farmers, and working men would be at the mercy of our triumphant rivals, and humiliated France herself would succumb to despondency and self-contempt.

". . . Our enemies need not make any mistake ! It is not for the sake of signing a precarious peace, which would be only an uneasy and fugitive truce between a war unduly curtailed and another and more terrible one, nor for the sake of exposing herself to renewed attacks and mortal perils in the future that France has risen in her might."

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2. *Future Causes of Conflict.*

No matter what sort of a peace the belligerents may agree upon, the principal difficulty will be to keep future causes of strife somewhat in check, for this will require superhuman sagacity.

The principle of nationalities will probably replace the old doctrine of equilibrium in the changes which peace will bring about. As a theory it is perfect, for it permits all nations to choose the system under which they wish to live, but there is a serious question as to how it is to be applied in countries where nationalities are closely intermingled, as in the Balkans, for instance, where Greeks, Serbians, Bulgarians, Roumanians, Hungarians, and others lay claim to the same provinces in the name of the same principle. The difficulties in its way seem insurmountable. Triest, for example, is an Italian city, surrounded by a population of Slavs who have lived in the same district since the time of Charlemagne, and who will never submit to a Latin domination.

Side by side with these European questions Asiatic problems will arise, chief among them the absorption of China by Japan, a pacific conquest which has been silently accomplished during the war and whose history will form a source of the most curious psychological documents.

My readers will recall what singular ignorance of the Asiatic character was displayed by the French diplomats when for a time they imagined that they

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could obtain the aid of the Mikado's troops for the war in Europe. Their astonishing campaign was hailed with enthusiasm by the Press, though it needed no great sagacity to realize that Japan had not the faintest idea of sending her armies to help us, but was employing them in a way that was far better suited to her interests.¹ As might have been expected, she has utilized the conflict, which has stopped any move on the part of the Great Powers, to impose a protectorate upon China and to dictate a policy which will lead to the rapid elimination of foreigners from that country.

The Japanese hegemony which has thus been established over China is certain to have immense consequences, and Germany, who was advised by her political authors to go to war for the sake of opening up new markets will soon find—as will all the other European Powers, for that matter—that the most important of the Asiatic markets is closed to her. Nor will this be the only result of Japanese influence, for the primordial part which modern warfare assigns to the numerical factor will give the four hundred million Chinese, when subjected to the Japanese and drilled by them, a world-power which may well become preponderant, as our diplomats will no doubt one day discover.

¹ The French Press was unanimous at the time, and an ex-Minister for Foreign Affairs was one of the most energetic advocates of the project. I fancy that I was the only man who attempted to demonstrate its folly. My remarks on the subject were rejected by every newspaper except M. Clémenceau's, and even then some essential parts of my letter were suppressed by the censor.

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3. *Ideas of Foreign Writers with Regard to the End of the War and the Condition of Europe after Peace has been signed.*

The future of Europe seems dark enough to-day ; but as all forecasts are mere hypotheses, everybody may choose the one which satisfies him best, and perhaps it will not be uninteresting to show what ideas writers of different nationalities entertain with regard to it. Out of the enormous number of contradictory prophecies which have been made I shall choose a few which emanate from well-known personages.

Professor Eduard Meyer, of the University of Berlin, says :—

“The one thing certain is that a return to the conditions which existed before the war is henceforth entirely impossible. The world will be quite different after the war from what it was before, even if the frontiers of the various States are changed but little, or not at all ; for multitudes of new problems will arise and demand to be solved, while others which seemed settled will force themselves upon our attention again, and will often exert the strength of primary elements.

“One of the most direct and disastrous results of this universal war, for which England is responsible [what a persistent illusion this is !], will be the formidable increase in the power of Japan, and out of this there will inevitably come a gigantic struggle for the mastery of the Pacific and the Indian Ocean. As has often happened before,

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England has blindly armed the most dangerous of all the enemies who threaten her power."

The author cherishes the hope that Germany may crush England, but adds :—

" It is much more probable that even if we conquer at all points we shall have to be satisfied with small results. England will take advantage of the first opportunity to begin the struggle again, at the head of the same coalition or of some new one, and she will be better prepared. A long series of grievous and bloody wars will result, and will continue until a final decision has been reached. This is why I see in this universal war, for which England is responsible (1), a decisive turning-point in modern history, and many are the symptoms which show that from now on modern civilization will slowly but surely follow a descending curve, as did its ancient counterpart after the Punic Wars."

Count Andrassy, an ex-Prime Minister of Hungary, has written a remarkable article called *The World-War and Liberty*, in which he expresses no fear of Japan or England, but a dread of Russia :—

" . . . If the Russian Empire assumes such enormous proportions, it will become the greatest enemy of free intellectual life, for no other Power is in such a position as the Czar's Government to impede intellectual liberty, and none would be so absolutely forced to take this course in the case we have supposed.

" The Russian system of government is incapable of liberty, not only because of egoism and for the

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sake of maintaining its domination, but also because Russia is composed of such heterogeneous elements and races that only a strongly centralized power can preserve the nation intact. A free Russia would no longer be a unified Russia, and the greater the number of the oppressed races contained in it, the more must the Empire be a veritable imperialistic product, in which oppression is an urgent and organic necessity.

“ . . . When Pompey had been defeated, and, subsequently, after the death of Cæsar, when the legions of Brutus and Cassius had been destroyed by Augustus and Antony, the fate of the Roman Republic was sealed. A great struggle between the two conquerors, Octavius and Antony, was inevitable, but it could only decide which of the two was to be the master of the world, not whether liberty still existed.

“ And should the Central European Empires be defeated, there would be the same question as to whether the British Parliament or the White Czar would obtain the world's sovereignty.

“ The peace which we desire would be farther away than ever, and the liberty for which we hope would have ceased to exist.”

The sovereigns of the Confederated Germanic States have stooped for almost fifty years to the domination of victorious Prussia, and it is hard to think that they would be inclined to break away from her, even if she were conquered. Germany has gained so much military importance by her union with Prussia that there would always be a tendency to unification, even if a separation should

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take place. Baron Beyens, the former Belgian Minister at Berlin, justly remarks :—

“The war was greeted with quite as much applause in the other parts of Germany as in Prussia itself. The first manifestations were even more boisterous at Munich than at Berlin, and the Dresden mob smashed the windows of the British Legation with a fury which at least equalled that exhibited by the burghers of the Prussian capital. This state of mind proves in the first place that the portion of public opinion which was so demonstrative had become quite as perverted and quite as much infected with the virus of Pan-Germanism among the placid inhabitants of the South as among their northern brethren, whose infatuation for their own military supremacy is so great. It also shows that all Germans now consider Teutonic unity a condition indispensable to their existence as a nation.”

The few Germans whose reasoning faculties have not been altogether destroyed by this national infatuation realize very clearly how many difficulties are involved in the making of peace, as we see by the following extracts from an article by Professor Osterrieth :—

“Let us suppose that Germany is victorious, and has conquered England and reduced her to the condition of a vassal ; or else let us imagine that the Allies have succeeded in splitting up the Germanic Confederation and in enslaving the States of Southern Germany. In either case, could a political organization of this sort endure?

“Germany would never be able absolutely to

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protect Europe from an Asiatic invasion and at the same time to support the heavy burden of sea power which she would inherit from Great Britain ; and still less, if the Allies were victorious, could they do without Germany, who is a gigantic bulwark against Asia. European civilization cannot be preserved except by the union of the three Great Powers, Germany, France, and England. Any considerable change in the equilibrium of one will endanger the existence of the others, while if they are united they are the framework of Europe, and the other nations repose upon them, politically and ethnically.

“By reason of her peculiar position Russia is a world in herself, and her orthodoxy is rooted in Byzantium. She has attempted to assimilate our culture, but the source of her power will always be in Asia ; her intellectual and social development will create a new nation which will be different from the others, and which will lack the traditions that bind us together. Europe must take pains to guard against the cupidity of Russia, for she is an essentially Asiatic nation ” (*La Revue*).

The following are some opinions of Italian writers, one of whom, Signor Pareto, sees the difficulties, but is equally at a loss for a solution :—

“Two hypotheses are possible with regard to the way in which the present war may end. We may suppose that it will result in a peace which will leave the adversaries equal, or almost equal, in strength, in which case it will obviously be nothing more than a truce ; or we may imagine that it will end in complete, perfect, and absolute

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triumph for one of the belligerents. If the Triple Entente is victorious, I cannot see how it will be able to destroy the military power of Germany and prevent a subsequent reconstruction, any more than Napoleon could do in the case of Prussia after the battle of Jena. On the contrary, the grief and humiliation of defeat would tend, as they did then, to revive and stimulate the patriotic feelings of the Germans. If the Central European Empires win, I cannot see how they will be able to destroy the enormous empire of Great Britain and prevent the States of which it is composed from being reunited by a burning desire of revenge, and perhaps from gaining the support of the great power represented by the United States of America ; nor can I understand how the far-reaching Russian Empire could be seriously menaced and lose the hope of a brighter future."

Professor Rignano, another Italian author, says :—

"The Allies must not deceive themselves with the idea that they can utterly destroy Germany, for even in case they win a victory so decisive that they can dictate their own conditions to their rivals, they must consider that in a few years' time a country like Germany will have recovered from her reverses. They need only recall the rapid revival which took place in France after her very serious defeat in 1870 and 1871."

The preceding remarks show that the future is filled with strife and uncertainty, but they all presuppose an unchanged Germany. With regard to this matter, however, we may note that from the

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political standpoint despotic Germany is more than a century behind the democratic development of countries like America and England, and it accordingly seems doubtful whether her present form of government can last. In case her autocratic system should be transformed into a democratic one, it would be very difficult for her to wage an offensive war.

We shall now investigate other possible hypotheses, which have not as yet been formulated.

4. *Some Ideas derived from Experience with Regard to the Small Practical Utility of Warfare.*

Many writers have shown that warfare is inevitable as well as useful, that conflict is a law of nature, that strife exists everywhere, even in the cells of our bodies, that its slackening means illness, and that its cessation is death. In their eyes history seems to indicate that peace is merely an accidental truce between battles, for all civilizations have been founded upon war and destroyed by peace, and war in its turn produces qualities which peace cannot create, and which help to magnify the spirit of the race.

That these ideas have a substratum of truth cannot be denied; but the wars of old were never as destructive and sanguinary as they are now, for once armies contended, not whole nations, and, as I must say once more, under present conditions wars can only end in the almost total ruin of the belligerents. When all the gold of the fighting

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nations is turned into smoke and their funds into worthless paper they will go into bankruptcy, and hostilities will have to cease.

Is there any prospect that the peoples of the future will recognize the necessity of engaging less often in these ruinous conflicts, if not of abolishing them altogether? We may hope that the nations will discover their real interests in the long run, though, of course, we must not count too much on their sagacity.

But first of all we must set aside the childish babblings of the pacifists, who tell us that peace results from the triumph of right, for if a lasting peace is won, it will not be a product of right, but of economic and social necessities which are superior to all volition, and of a profound transformation in the ideas which rule mankind.

A slight change in the ideas of a nation is enough to modify its mentality, and hence its conduct. When there have been wars enough to ruin Germany industrially as well as financially, the Teutonic combatants will perhaps acquire a few concepts like the following :—

1. It is not quite certain that the Germans have been chosen by God to devastate the world and then to reign over it.

2. To massacre neighbours whom one detests and to burn their monuments and their cities is no doubt a very great pleasure ; but it is a pleasure which costs extremely dear in both men and money.

3. In the present state of the world's development economic warfare may enrich the conqueror, but

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military warfare will ruin him for a long time to come.

4. It is more profitable to transact business with one's enemies than to destroy them.

5. The modern era has developed between the nations a financial and industrial interdependence which is superior to all volition. They may hate one another, but they cannot long exist without exchanging the different wares which each one produces according to its climate and capacities.

Most of these truths are obvious, I fancy, but they are so in theory only, for they have not yet reached the sphere of the unconscious in which the causes of our actions are worked out, and many millions of men must perish before they can become motives of conduct. History shows that massacres and prolonged devastation have always been required for the triumph of a rational truth over illusions of an affective or mystic origin. From the Crusades to the Religious Wars the world was laid waste in order to secure the victory of ideas which to-day have neither strength nor influence. Illusions have nothing to fear but the weight of time, and this is why they have always been so very long-lived.

CONCLUSION

IN the present work I have exhibited the genesis of the European War, and have shown what psychological lessons it teaches us ; but the study of its political, psychological, and social consequences must be reserved for another volume.

The general conclusions reached in each chapter of this book are so detailed that they cannot be reduced to a summary, and I shall accordingly confine myself to a few remarks with regard to them.

Before now Europe has been convulsed by great cataclysms, and storms of death have burst upon generations which were fain to believe that the end of all things was at hand ; yet ever has a new world risen from the ruin-heaps of the old.

It would almost seem that when nations reach a certain point in their history they cannot progress except under the influence of these great crises, which are, perhaps, necessary for their release from the embrace of a past which clasps them too closely, and from habits and prejudices which have become too firmly established.

At the present time Germany is sacrificing her wealth and future prosperity to the desire of subjecting the other nations to her despotic sway, and rightly we execrate her ; but if the war had not

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occurred the world's indifference would gradually have made her portentous dream of hegemony an accomplished fact, and when the nations had at last felt the heavy pressure of Teutonic tyranny and had tried to shake it off, it would have been too late, for industry, science, commerce, and every other source of national wealth would have been found in German hands.

Peace would probably have given the Germans what they cannot gain by this gigantic conflagration; but their dream blinded them and they could not realize the truth, for they believed that they could revive the Roman Empire. It is impossible that this should ever be, for even though the German armies should win a hundred battles and lay a hundred cities waste, the world needs liberty so much and has so many means of defence that no Cæsar may hope to subject it to his laws.

The mentality of the modern era precludes the realization of the ideal of universal domination, which has obsessed so many conquerors, for in our day most nations would rather perish than submit to a hegemony imposed upon them by force. They are too conscious of their powers for the despotism of any autocrat to enslave them, and, though the countries which are invaded will no doubt be ruined, they need not fear servitude.

* * *

The destiny of the great European nations is hidden from us, for the future is written in a book which the human intellect cannot yet read. But though no one can reveal what the fulfilment of

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time will bring forth, we can at least look back into the past, which, as the creator of the present, contains the causes of events that are now taking place and of those that are to come. In the past lie the germs of the errors which weigh us down and have all but destroyed us ; for as the present shows results, so the past reveals the genesis of the present.

One reason why the Romans were great, as Montesquieu observed, was because they were always able to recognize the good qualities of the enemy and to adopt his methods at need. We should keep this lesson in mind, and study the military and industrial systems of the Germans with minute care. Of course, we must not try to copy them, for their mentality is not like ours ; but the same results may be obtained by different processes.

The German of our day is not by any means the transcendent creature whom the vanity of his historians has imagined him to be. He is the heir of the men whom Napoleon conquered at Jena with such ease, and he has nothing really superior about him except an exceedingly strict discipline and a meticulous organization which is well adapted to the needs of the modern era.

His mysticism does not prevent him from pursuing very practical aims. Unlike the armies of the French Revolution, he is not fighting for the triumph of an idea which is capable of fascinating those whom he conquers, but for a position of supremacy which will permit him to increase his commercial profits. We shall not be able to outdo

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him in this field, but there are others in which our time-honoured pre-eminence will hold its own.

* * *

The German plan of warfare has changed according to circumstances, but throughout the campaign it has always aimed at the conquest of territory—first the rich industrial districts of Belgium and France, then Poland, Lithuania, and Courland in Russia, and finally Constantinople and, if possible, the Suez Canal and Egypt.

But even supposing that this last undertaking had proved successful, the Germans could not consider the war as won or believe that they would have nothing more to do but protect their conquests, as they have done in France, by a system of fortified trenches to prevent counter-attacks. As a matter of fact, all their triumphs can avail them naught while England bars the way to the sea-borne trade without which Germany cannot long exist ; and this England will do until the need is past, for her fleet rules the seas without a rival.

* * *

When the war is over France will probably be almost drained of men and money ; but her illusions and the errors which would have ended in her decline will be gone too.

When we cast up accounts we shall find that our social structure has been sadly enfeebled by political and religious dissensions, and we must remember that the nations which have been unable to relinquish intestine strife have disappeared from

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history; for domestic enemies always make men impotent to resist the foreign foe.

It will be a heavy task to knit the weakened bonds of society together, and many an element of our individual and social life will need to undergo a radical change.

One of the most difficult undertakings will be to free ourselves from the baleful power of words; for by means of a few popular formulas on progress, pacifism, socialism, and universal brotherhood, the puissant eloquence of our orators has disguised realities whose weight has almost submerged us.

We must also acquire sentiments of duty and responsibility, which we have lacked somewhat, and the spirit of solidarity, which we have lacked still more. The war has given us these good qualities, and in peace we must endeavour to preserve them.

Above all else, our social laws and our educational system will require vigilant attention.

As to the disastrous influence exerted by the social legislation of France, the reader may consult my *Psychologie politique*, where he will see the abyss towards which it was leading us.

Education, which is the fundamental basis of all reform, is a subject upon which I cannot touch in this place, and I shall only quote a brief extract from my *Psychologie de l'Éducation*, in which I discussed pedagogic reform:—

“The qualities which go to make up character play a preponderant part in the phase of development which the world has attained through science and industry. Initiative, perseverance, precision,

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good sense, energy, will, self-control, and the sentiment of duty are faculties without which all the gifts of the intellect are of no avail, and when they have not been granted by inheritance, education alone can help a little to create them."

Our universities do not inculcate these qualities, and, what is still worse, the oppressive scholastic system takes them away even from those of our youth who possess them. Our methods need a thorough change, for upon the solution of the educational problem our future depends.¹

* * *

Whatever success Europe may win in the end over Germany's attempt at hegemony, there is no hope that it will be lasting, for the ideal of domination is one of those mystic beliefs whose duration is never brief. A nation which has been chosen by God to conquer and regenerate the world does not readily abandon such a mission, and Germany will not relinquish it until she has been defeated many times.

The civilized nations are now exposed to far more formidable perils than the loss of their wealth and the vanishing of the best elements among their populations; for they are really threatened with the disappearance of certain virtues which have been acquired gradually, and which

¹ This opinion, which I have maintained for many years, has also been expressed recently by an eminent member of the *Académie des Sciences*, M. H. Le Châtelier. He believes, and on this point I am of the same mind, that the necessary changes cannot be carried out by the present generation. Where, indeed, could we find a will strong enough to impose them, and professors capable of executing them?

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have hitherto been the glory and delight of civilization, but which have now become a danger to those who possess them, and hence seem doomed to pass away.

Loyalty, integrity, tenderness, respect for a promise and a treaty, or, in a word, all the various forms of honour, have become a source of weakness in a struggle against nations which do not respect such things, and perhaps they will be unable to hold their own in the future; but the day when all these virtues have perished forever, and when blind forces shall rule the world to the exclusion of all else, mankind will be condemned to the most barbarous retrogression, and the centres of civilization will inevitably shift.

The most popular of Teutonic scholars asserts that the principles of fraternity, equality, and liberty, upon which society leans more and more, must be replaced by the Darwinian formula of a pitiless struggle leading to the survival of the strongest: biological justice, the German historians call it.

Although naturalists are not yet quite convinced of this sanguinary law, it may perhaps rule the animal world; but science has exerted all its efforts to free man from nature's cruelty and to protect his weakness.

Are we to relinquish the conquests of civilization and see an unending repetition of these horrible hecatombs, which mow down the youth of a nation, ruin entire provinces, and destroy the most unsullied masterpieces of the past? Is brutal force destined to become the only ruler of the nations, as it was at

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the beginning of the world? Must mankind submit to a pitiless barbarism, which condemns the weak to hopeless slavery? No one can tell.

One would despair of the human mind if its many triumphs over nature were to end in this, and dark indeed would be the future of mankind if all that beautifies existence were to be replaced by savage strife, broken only by stern intervals of gloomy barrack life.

It cannot be, because we will not have it so. Natural laws are powerful, no doubt, but science, which seeks to dominate them, is very powerful too.

In any case, we must not speak too freely of natural laws, for we know very little about them. Nature, to whom we appeal so often, is full of mysteries. Her reasons are not our reasons, and she knows not the measure wherewith we mete. Our knowledge is of the transitory only; she regards naught but the permanent. Our greatest disasters no doubt seem to her mere imperceptible ripples upon a boundless ocean. She causes life to arise out of death, and with her eternal forces fashions fleeting and evanescent forms.

Scholars may rise above the illusions which rule the nations, and may discover the realities which underlie appearances, but no one of them has yet penetrated into that unknown land where Nature elaborates the reasons of things.

Let us then not give up the hope we formed in hours that were less dark, for the world is changing so quickly to-day that the unforeseen often foils our ephemeral truths.

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A philosophical view of events must not lead us to forget the menaces of the present. As I write these lines, the most prosperous provinces of France are being ravaged without pause or stay, the Russian armies have been driven back, Poland is lost, and her important cities and fortresses are burnt or conquered.

All these disasters will have no result if our will to win persists, for the conquest of a nation's territory is not enough. To dominate a people its soul must be vanquished too.

When Hannibal destroyed the last of the Roman armies at Cannæ, he thought that he had conquered for ever the rival whom his country feared ; but he had not made the will of Rome to stoop, and it was Carthage which finally disappeared from the world's stage.

Germany has not enfeebled the will of any nation which she has invaded. All of them would rather die than submit.

Such energy suffices, for to-day there is no despot so mighty that he can dominate a people which will not obey. Napoleon discovered this in Spain. He took her cities and vanquished her armies, but although he was the greatest soldier in history he did not subjugate her.

The future depends, beyond all else, upon the continuance of our will. *Conquer or die, but never yield!* must be the brief watchword of the nations which Germany would enslave. Neither Nature, nor man, nor fate itself, can withstand a strong and steadfast will. I have said it over and over again, and I repeat it once more.

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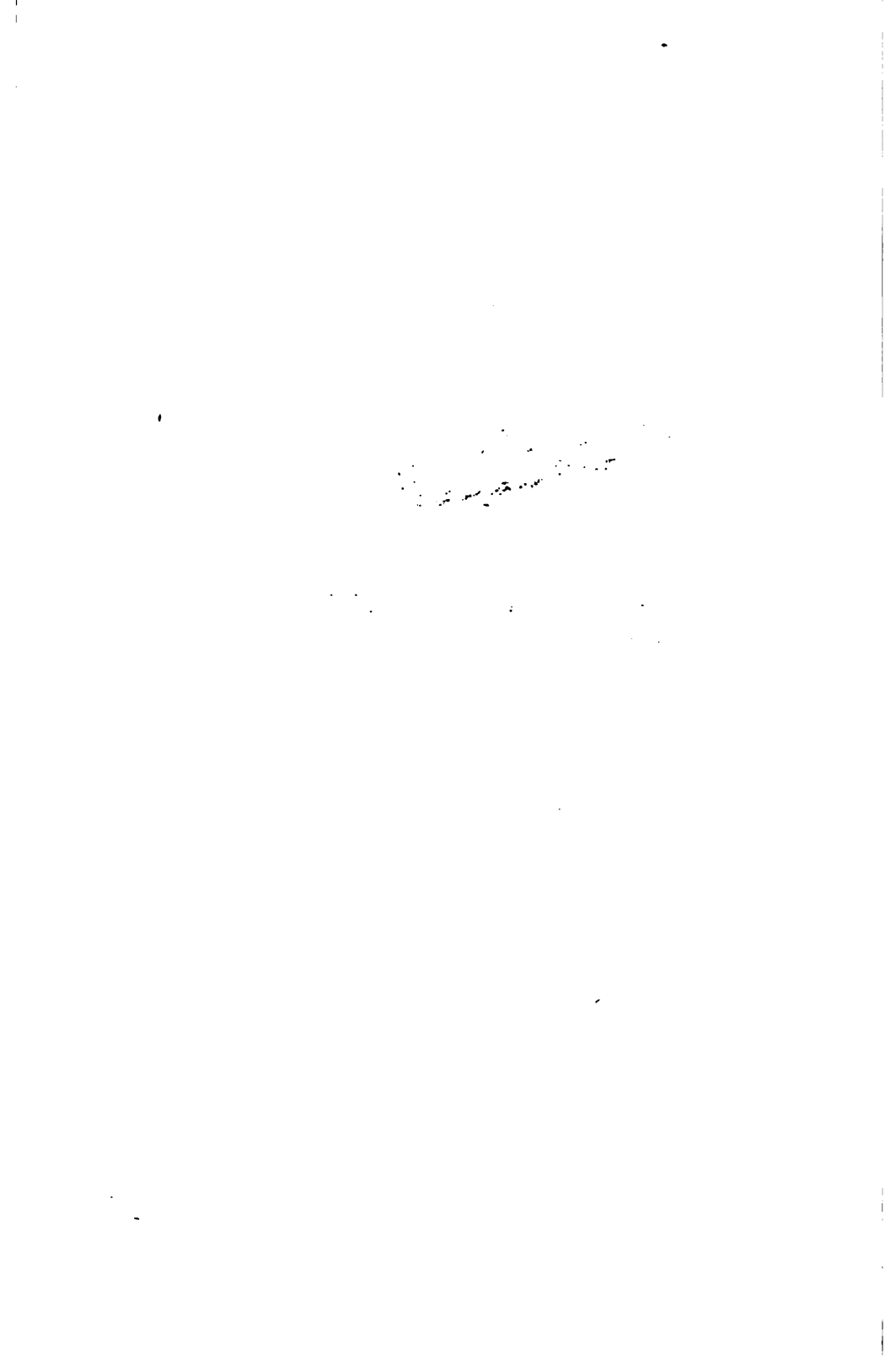
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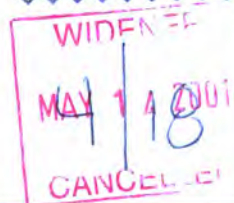
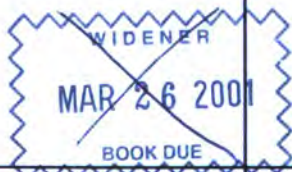
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